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# MODERN CRITICISM AND THE PREACHING OF THE OLD TESTAMENT

## By GEORGE ADAM SMITH

D.D., LL.D.

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# MODERN CRITICISM

AND THE PREACHING OF

# THE OLD TESTAMENT

*Eight Lectures on the Lyman Beecher*
*Foundation, Yale University*

BY

GEORGE ADAM SMITH, D.D., LL.D.

PROFESSOR OF OLD TESTAMENT LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
UNITED FREE CHURCH OF SCOTLAND GLASGOW COLLEGE

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TO

THE REV. TIMOTHY DWIGHT, D.D.
PRESIDENT OF YALE UNIVERSITY, 1886-1899
THE REV. GEORGE P. FISHER, D.D.
DEAN OF THE DIVINITY SCHOOL, 1895-1901
AND
THE REV. CHARLES RAY PALMER, D.D.
ONE OF THE FELLOWS OF THE UNIVERSITY
THIS VOLUME OF LECTURES
DELIVERED WHILE THEY WERE IN OFFICE
IS GRATEFULLY DEDICATED

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# PREFACE

The Eight Lectures in this volume — or at least as much of each as it was possible to read within the time allotted — were delivered before Yale University in 1899. I have thought it best to leave them as Lectures: that is, in the style of spoken discourse. With one exception they are printed as they were prepared for delivery. but I have worked into four of them — II., III., IV. and VI. — some materials from books which have appeared since they were spoken: Canon Driver's Essay on Hebrew Authority in *Authority and Archæology, Sacred and Profane*, edited by Mr. Hogarth; Professor Budde's Lectures on the Religion of Israel before the Exile; and Professor Charles' Jowett Lectures, entitled *A Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life.* Lecture VII. on the Preaching of the Prophets to their own Times has been wholly rewritten in order to introduce a detailed account (of which only a brief summary could be spoken) of the Influence of the Prophets upon the Social Ethics of Christendom. In the Introduction and in Lectures I., III., IV. and VII. there are some paragraphs from an address on *The Preaching of the Old Testament to the Age*, delivered in 1892, and now out of print.

The objects of the Lectures are, in the main, three: a statement of the Christian right of criticism; an account of the modern critical movement so far as the Old Testament is concerned; and an appreciation of its effects upon the Old Testament as history and as the record of a Divine Revelation. Obviously eight Lectures cannot provide an exhaustive treatment of these themes; but the Lectures contain, I trust, enough to serve their purely practical aim, and to exhibit to students and preachers the religious effects of the critical interpretation of the larger half of the Scriptures of the Church. In the Fourth Lecture the line of argument is intended for believers in the Christian doctrine of Revelation. I have always felt that for those who believe in the Incarnation the fact of a Divine Revelation through the religion of early Israel, as critically interpreted, ought not to be unintelligible. If we recognise that God was in Christ revealing Himself to men and accomplishing their redemption, it cannot be difficult for us to understand how at first, under the form of a tribal deity — the only conception of the Divine nature of which at the time the Semitic mind was capable — He gradually made known His true character and saving grace.

In connection with the subject of Lecture v., 'The Spirit of Christ in the Old Testament,' I desire to acknowledge my indebtedness to the late Principal Patrick Fairbairn's *The Typology of Scripture* (2 vols., 6th edition, Edinburgh 1876). It is a work distinguished not less by sagacious criticism of the older theories of typology than by original insight into the ethical virtue of the institutions of Israel. Although constructed upon lines not followed by the critical interpretation of the Old Testament, it not seldom anticipates methods and ideas which have only recently passed into acceptance.

GEORGE ADAM SMITH.

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# INTRODUCTION

To follow the long succession of men who have filled this lectureship, and to attempt — in response to your call — some addition to their numerous illustrations of the genius and office of the preacher, involves an adventure which can be justified only by one or other of the following considerations.

First, that of so wide a field as that of the Christian pulpit, there is some portion which, though not altogether neglected by my predecessors, has received from none of them a particular or exclusive treatment. Or secondly, that, in some department of the subject the materials have passed through those furnaces of criticism which our generation has so zealously fired, and have there undergone changes that render imperative some new appreciation of them for the purposes of practical religion.

I believe that for the subject I have chosen, not only one but both of these reasons are urgent. None of my predecessors has attempted a full exposition of the material which the Old Testament offers to the Christian preacher.

This fact alone might have determined the subject of the following course; but at the same time, as every one is aware, there is no part of the preacher's field or material which has been the object of more industrious research or of more unsparing criticism than the several Books of the Old Testament, and the national history of which they form the record. For over a century every relevant science, every temper of faith, and, one might add, almost every school of philosophy, have shot across this narrow field their opposing lights : under which there has been an expenditure of individual labour and ingenuity greater than has been devoted to any other literature of the ancient world, or to any other period in the history of religion. No memory or institution of Israel, no chapter or verse of her sacred texts has escaped this strenuous revision: nor, with the exception of the New Testament, is there any field on which such revision could have raised questions of more moment for the practical religion with which the duty of the preacher is identified. Beyond the problems of integrity and authenticity, in the narrower sense of these terms; beyond the greater question how much actual history has been left to us in the Old Testament by the processes of criticism, there remains the most important interest of all: Can we still receive the Old Testament as the record of a genuine revelation from God? But indeed your own experience more than any words of mine will have convinced you of the practical value, at this time, of some attempt to appreciate the effects of criticism upon the inspiration and material for preaching which the Christian Church has always drawn from the larger half of her canonical Scriptures.

Before we begin, it is well that we should impress ourselves with the sacredness of the task which we propose. This is no common ground we are to be treading. It is not some outlying province of the Kingdom of God, some questionable frontier of our fatherland, which we are called to debate; but (if I may continue the figure) it is that country of which our Redeemer was Himself a native; whose character He defined in absolute contrast to the rest of the world; whose history He interpreted as the Divine preparation for His own Advent; whose laws He fulfilled as the expression of the everlasting righteousness of God; and much of whose language He perpetuated in the wider Kingdom He came to found.

In short, it is with Christ's Bible we have to do; the larger part of the Scriptures bequeathed to His Church; and we have to do with this not simply in its historical interest but in its religious value for living men.

The Old Testament, one cannot too often remember, lies not *under* but *behind* the New. It is not the quarry of the excavator or archæologist —a mere foundation packed away out of sight beneath the more glorious structure which has been reared upon it. Far rather — if I may borrow a metaphor from the political geography of the day — far rather is the Old Testament the 'Hinterland' of the New: part of the same continent of truth, without whose ampler areas and wider watersheds the rivers which grew to their fulness in the new dispensation could never have gained one-tenth of their volume or their influence. And upon that vast Hinterland the Gentile Church of Christ, passing to it across the New Testament, has settled and been at home for centuries; has found in it her school and her sanctuary; has met with her God, has breathed the air of His righteousness and heard His words, as powerful as when they were first uttered, to move men to repentance and faith in God and the hope of an endless life.

It is upon all this — Christ's Bible and the Church's Bible, Christ's Fatherland and the Church's Fatherland — that we are called to estimate the effect of one of the most thorough intellectual processes of our time.

# LECTURE I

## THE LIBERTY AND DUTY OF OLD TESTAMENT CRITICISM AS PROVED FROM THE NEW TESTAMENT

FEW realise that the Church of Christ possesses a higher warrant for her Canon of the Old Testament than she does for her Canon of the New.

The New Testament Scriptures were selected and defined, no man exactly knows how, except that it was the Church herself which did the work. The formal decrees of Councils[1] appear to have been only confirmatory of the common use and practice of the Church under the guidance of her Lord's Spirit. This practice had risen gradually and with differences in different parts of Christendom. The Church was the recipient of a number of writings, some anonymous, but the most bearing the name of an apostle or of a disciple of the apostles. From these a selection was slowly effected, partly by the spiritual taste and insight of the various congregations, partly on the strength of tradition, and partly by the opinions and discussions of the doctors of the Church.[1] That is to say, the New Testament Canon was a result of criticism in the widest sense of the word.

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[1] The Canon was discussed and defined by the great Councils of the fourth century. The Third Council of Carthage, 397 A.D., recognised our present New Testament.

But what the Church thus once achieved, the Church may at any time revise. As a matter of fact she has never renounced her liberty to do so, and it has not been heretics alone who have disputed the rights of certain books to belong to the New Testament. To mention but a few instances, Gregory and Zwingli both rejected the Apocalypse, and Luther the Epistle of St. James. Augustine testifies that all the authorities of his time were not agreed as to the Canon,[2] and even Calvin appears to leave the question still open.[3]

These are enough to recall to us, that what was the decision of the Church's criticism at the beginning is not beyond the Church's criticism now, unless indeed we have ceased to believe in that education of the Spirit which Christ promised to His people, and refuse to employ the finer instruments of criticism which God's providence has put into their hands to-day.

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[1] The most summary evidence of the gradual criticism and selection which led to the formation of the New Testament Canon is found in Eusebius, *Hist. Eccl.* (325 A.D.), bk. iii. 25: where the undisputed books are distinguished from the disputed and the spurious. Among the still disputed books, Eusebius places James, Jude, 2nd Peter, 2nd and 3rd John, Hebrews, and the Apocalypse. He himself appears to question the Apocalypse.

[2] *De Doctrina Christiana.*

[3] *Antidote to the Council of Trent:* 4th Session. Cf. *Institut.* iv. 9, § 14.

So it was with the growth of the Canon of the New Testament, and what I wish to emphasise is that — with one important exception — the Canon of the Old Testament came to us in no other way. We are ignorant of vast stretches of its history; but we know enough to be sure that the theory of its origin which lately prevailed among Protestants, and which ascribed the Canon of the Old Testament to a single decision of the Jewish Church in the days of her inspiration, is not a theory supported by facts. The growth of the Old Testament as a Canon was very gradual.[1]

Virtually it began in the reign of King Josiah in 621 B.C., with the acceptance by all Judah of the Book of Deuteronomy as the divine law of their life, and its first stage was completed by the similar adoption of the whole Law, or first five Books of the Old Testament, under Nehemiah in 445 B.C. When the other two divisions were added is somewhat uncertain: the Prophets[2] probably before 200 B.C., and the Hagiographa[3] from a century to two centuries later. The strict definition of the third division was not complete by the time of Christ, nor was the selection of the whole twenty-two (or twenty-four) Books effected either before or after that time by a miraculous decree from Heaven, or by any decision of a Jewish Council. The only decision of the kind which is known to history is that said to have been made by a Synod of Jamnia in 90 A.D., and this Synod appears to have provided merely a few puerile reasons for confirming the canonicity of certain Books, which had already for nearly two centuries enjoyed the reverence of the people. In contrast to this tardy and partial influence of a Council, it is very probable that what secured to the Prophets and the Hagiographa their canonical rank, was their inherent worth and vitality as tested by popular use. True, it may have been necessary that, before the authority of some of these Books was recognised, they should be proved to be ancient, and should wear, like the Law, the name of some great Prophet in Israel; and it is also true that this notion may have led to errors about their date and authorship, which we are only now able to correct. But it was not the famous names they wore which buoyed these Books upon the reverence of the Church; for other writings, which we know, wear the same names, but have not therefore been lifted into the Canon. Nor was the alleged antiquity of the Books indispensable or conclusive. The early collections of Israel's songs have not survived; while the Maccabean Psalms must have been received into the Canon at a date at which their recent origin was still remembered. But the Maccabean Psalms were associated with a great deliverance of His people by God; and all the rest of the literature, which was really ancient, had won the proof of its divinity either by the vindication of its predictions by history, or by the power it evinced of living and giving life from age to age. Without such effects and testimonies in the experience of the nation, no name, whether it really belonged to a book or had been thrust upon it, no ascription of antiquity and no official decree could have availed to bestow canonical rank. Not learned discussion by scribes and doctors, whose reasons, so far as they have come down to us, are all afterthoughts and mostly foolish ones, but proof beneath the strain of time, persecution, and the needs of each new age — these were what proved the truth of a Book, enforced its indispensableness to the spiritual life of God's people, or to their national discipline, and declared the will of Providence regarding it. In short, we see the same processes at work for the formation of the Canon of the Old Testament as we do for that of the New.

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[1] The text-book in English on the subject is that by Professor Ryle of Queen's College, Cambridge, *The Canon of the Old Testament.* See also the article by Professor Budde in *The Encyclopædia Biblica*, vol. i.

[2] That is, according to the division of the Hebrew Bible, Joshua, Judges, Books of Samuel and Kings; Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Book of the Twelve Prophets.

[3] The Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles, Ruth, Lamentations, Ecclesiastes, Esther, Daniel, Ezra, Nehemiah, and Chronicles.

Yet, as I have said, the Old Testament Canon is accredited in addition by an authority, of which the New Testament is devoid. This is the authority of Jesus Christ Himself. In the days of our Lord, the Scriptures of the Jewish Church were practically the same which form our Old Testament, arranged as they still are in the Jewish Bible in the three divisions of Law, Prophets, and Hagiographa, beginning with Genesis and ending with Chronicles. The New Testament writers take for granted that there is a well-known and definite body of Scriptures, which is quoted by Christ Himself as the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms.[1] We do not indeed know the exact contents of that third division, to which Christ gave the name of its most conspicuous member. On the one hand, the Book of Daniel — with the exception of certain Psalms, the latest Book of all — is frequently acknowledged by New Testament writers; and Christ Himself seems to testify to the limits of the Hebrew Canon, exactly as they now lie in Genesis and Chronicles.[2] But, on the other hand, neither our Lord nor the Apostles make any quotation from Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Canticles or Ecclesiastes, the three last of which Books were not yet recognised by all the Jewish schools.

This possible deduction, however, is insignificant, and we do not exaggerate if we say that the

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[1] Luke xxiv. 44.

[2] Matt. xxiii. 35, compared with Gen. iv. and 2 Chron. xxiv. 21.

Bible of the Jews in our Lord's time was practically our old Testament. For us its supreme sanction is that which it received from Christ Himself. It was the Bible of His education and the Bible of His ministry. He took for granted its fundamental doctrines about creation, about man and about righteousness; about God's Providence of the world and His purposes of grace through Israel. He accepted its history as the preparation for Himself, and taught His disciples to find Him in it. He used it to justify His mission and to illuminate the mystery of His Cross. He drew from it many of the examples and most of the categories of His gospel. He re-enforced the essence of its law and restored many of its ideals. But above all, He fed His own soul with its contents, and in the great crises of His life sustained Himself upon it as upon the living and sovereign Word of God. These are the highest external proofs — if indeed we can call them external — for the abiding validity of the Old Testament in the life and doctrine of Christ's Church. What was indispensable to the Redeemer must always be indispensable to the redeemed.

But while we look to Christ as the chief Authority for our Old Testament, we must never forget that He was also its first Critic. He came to a people, who lived under a strict and literal enforcement of the Law; and whose religious leaders at the time aggravated the strictness and complexity of the Law by a mass of traditional precepts. Not only did Jesus reject these traditions. He equally rejected some parts of the Law itself, and directed His own conduct in sovereign indifference to many other parts. This statement is not contradicted by the well-known verses: *Think not that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets; I came not to destroy but to fulfil. For verily I say unto you, Till Heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the Law till all be accomplished.*[1] If, as most critics allow, the second of these verses be a genuine utterance of our Lord, its words must be interpreted by His own definition of what the Law was. Christ effected that definition in various ways. Upon more than one occasion He extracted the ideal or essential part of the Law and defined it as the whole: *Whatsoever ye wish that men should do to you, so also do ye to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets;*[2] and again: *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and thy soul, and thy mind, and thy neighbour as thyself. On these two commandments hangeth all the law.*[3] Sometimes He took special precepts of the Law, like the sixth and seventh Commandments, and enforced a fulfilment of them far beyond their literal meaning.[1] Or He took the rigorous precept, *an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth*, or the statement which is not found in the Old Testament in so many words, but which expresses the temper of much of the Law: *Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy*,[2] and He reversed them. Or He took the law of divorce and declared it to have been temporary, granted to a rude age of the nation's development and now to be abrogated.[3] Or He ascribed the character of transitoriness to the whole of the Old Testament: *the law and the prophets were till John; from that time the kingdom of heaven is preached*.[4] That is to say, a new dispensation had opened, in which the older revelation enjoyed no longer the same rank or significance.

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[1] Matt. v. 17, 18.

[2] Matt. vii. 12.

[3] Matt. xxii. 40.

Jesus, it is true, rendered obedience to many of the formal statutes. He paid the Temple-tax,[5] and commanded the Leper whom He cured to *show himself to the priest and offer the gift which Moses commanded*.[6] But these and other details He enforced on the ground not of principle but of expediency, and in order to prevent needless scandals in the way of others.[7] The expediency was due to the circumstances of His own time, and with these would pass away.

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[1] Matt. v. 21 ff. anger; 27 ff. lust.

[2] Matt. v. 38 ff., 43 ff.

[3] Matt. v. 31 ff., and elsewhere.

[4] Matt. xi. 12 ff.; Luke xvi. 16.

[5] Matt. xvii. 24–27.

[6] Matt. viii. 1–4.

[7] Matt. xvii. 27.

To many other observances of the Law, Christ showed, by His neglect of them, or by His positive transgression, a high superiority. He touched the Leper and did not feel Himself unclean;[1] He reckoned all foods as lawful;[2] He broke away from the literal observance of the Sabbath Law.[3] He left no commands about sacrifice, the temple-worship, or circumcision, but on the contrary, by the institution of the New Covenant, He abrogated for ever these sacraments of the Old.

Thus, as Professor Denney remarks,[4] Christ 'presents a positive new standard of life, from which legalism has disappeared, a standard of love exhibited either in His own example or in that of His heavenly Father by which all men are to be judged. . . . All these modes of conceiving the standard of disciple-life, though not annulling the Law but fulfilling it, are nevertheless indifferent to it, either as a historic document or as a national institution.'[5]

Let us now pass to the Apostles. From the first the Apostles employed the Old Testament in all their preaching, whether apologetic or practical. Even those of them who emphasise the exhaustion of the old dispensation are ready, like the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, to draw from its Scriptures declarations of the character and will of God, examples of faith, and directions both for conduct and worship. Paul affirms that, while the Gentile has not been left without a revelation of God, it has been the glory of the Jew to possess a definite and authoritative expression of God's will in the Scriptures. To the Jew have been intrusted the oracles of God;[1] which reveal His character,[2] and the purposes of His Providence both with regard to Israel[3] and other nations, as well as His statutes for man's daily life. Paul even includes the ceremonial Law[4] within this divine endowment of his people. Moreover, the Scriptures of the Jews are prophetic, the history and the institutions recorded in them are typical, of the new dispensation itself.[5] In every way the Old Testament is of significance to the Church of Christ. *Whatsoever things were written aforetime, were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope.*[6] *Now all these things happened unto Israel by way of figure; and they*

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[1] Matt. viii. 1–4. [2] Mark vii. 15; Luke xi. 37; cf. x. 7.

[3] Matt. xii. 1–12; Luke xiii. 10–17; xiv. 1–6; John v. 1–17.

[4] Messrs. Clark's *Bible Dictionary*, art. 'Law in the New Testament.'

[5] On the whole subject see especially Robert Mackintosh, *Christ and the Jewish Law*. London, 1886.

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[1] Rom. iii. 2.

[2] Rom. iii. 4 (Ps. li. 4); Rom. ix. 15, 17, 20 (Exod. xxxiii. 19; Isa. xlv. 9, 10); Rom. xi. 34 (Isa. xl. 13); 1 Cor. ii. 16, etc.

[3] Rom. iv. 3 (Gen. xv. 6), 17 (Gen. xvii. 5); ix.-xi., etc.

[4] Λατρεία, Rom. ix. 4.

[5] 1 Cor. x. 1 ff., etc.

[6] Rom. xv. 4.

*are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the world are come.*[1]

But we must go further and notice that these opinions of the abiding validity of the Old Testament were held by the Apostles along with a very strict belief in the inspiration of its text.[2] In the inspiration of the letter of the Old Testament the Apostles sometimes appear to have as explicit a confidence as the Jewish doctors of their time. Not only is it God's Spirit who, according to them, speaks by the mouths of prophets and psalmists, but every word which they quote — however detached from its context and however much in their application of it they may change its meaning from that which it plainly bears in the original — is in their belief a word of God.

At first sight this apostolic testimony seems to exclude modern criticism from every right or claim to apply its methods to the Old Testament. A little observation, however, will show us that the very opposite is the case; and that the treatment of the Old Testament by the Apostles, so far from silencing critical questions, raises these in a somewhat more aggravated form than the Old Testament by itself does. For, in the first place, let me remind you, the apostolic writings nowhere define the limits of the Old Testament Canon.

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[1] 1 Cor. x. 11.

[2] Compare Reuss, *History of the Canon of the Holy Scriptures*, trans. by Hunter, pp. 12 ff.

On the contrary, their employment of what the Church now regards as extra-canonical writings,[1] and their appeal to questionable traditions as if these were of equal validity with writings which we regard as canonical, seems to indicate that the Apostles fixed no such hard lines round the Scriptures as the Jewish, and some parts of the Christian, Church afterwards fixed. Again, let us take a still more significant fact. For the most part the writers of the New Testament, whether in the Gospels or the discourses of the Book of Acts or the Epistles, draw their Old Testament citations from the Greek version or 'Septuagint.' Not only does that version contain a number of Books which the Hebrew Canon excludes;[2] but in the Books which it has in common with the latter we can see that the Hebrew text, from which the translation was made, sometimes varied substantially from the canonical Hebrew text; and even where the text has been the same, the Greek version often gives a different meaning from that of the original. And although in some of these differences between the Hebrew and the Greek, the latter has the sounder reading and enables us to correct the former, yet in other cases it is clear either that the translators' reading of the text was wrong or that they were mistaken in their rendering of it into Greek. Of these discrepancies between the Greek and the Hebrew there are instances among the citations made from the Old Testament by New Testament writers. Paul himself, while proving his acquaintance with the Hebrew original,[1] quotes from the Greek even where this differs from the Hebrew. In one passage the Greek enables him to quote some words of Hosea in an opposite sense from that in which the Prophet employed them.[2] And in general, indifference is shown about the exact words of the citations. They are quoted loosely, as if from memory; different passages are mingled and even at one point,[3] under the Scriptural formula, *as it is written*, an apocryphal writing is fused with one from the Book of Isaiah.

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[1] I Cor. ii. 9; Heb. xi. 37; Jude 9, 14 f., where the Book of Enoch is directly quoted. For other New Testament passages which it has influenced, see *Encyc. Biblica*, i. p. 225, § 32.

[2] Which fact, taken along with the Apostles' use of apocryphal writings as 'Scripture' or as true history, seems to imply that the Apostles accepted the wider Canon of the Hellenist Jews rather than the Hebrew one. But this is not certain.

Nor is that all, for when we pass from the quotation of the Old Testament text by the Apostles to their interpretation of it, we find much more that raises questions. In his exegesis of the Old Testament, Paul, upon several occasions, follows the allegorising methods of the Jewish schools of his time;[1] in one instance he calls the literal meaning of an Old Testament passage impossible and substitutes for it a metaphorical application of his own, although there can be no doubt that the literal meaning was that of the original author.[2]

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[1] *E.g.* 1 Cor. xv. 54, quoting from Isa. xxv. 8: the LXX. in which passage makes Death triumph. Paul follows the Hebrew sense, while adopting a slightly different reading.

[2] 1 Cor. xv. 55.

[3] 1 Cor. ii. 9.

We have now before us the essential facts in the use of the Old Testament by Christ and His Apostles. What conclusions may we draw from them?

The first is that of the abiding value of the Old Testament for the life and doctrine of the Christian Church. That which was used by the Redeemer Himself for the sustenance of His own soul can never pass out of the use of His redeemed. That from which He proved the divinity of His mission, and the age-long preparation for His coming, must always have a principal place in His Church's argument for Him. Not less than His Apostles will His Church see revealed in the Old Testament the character of God; while some of His attributes—

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[1] 2 Cor. iii. 13 ff.; Gal. iv. 22 ff.

[2] Deut. xxv. 4 forbids the muzzling of the ox which treads out the corn. In 1 Cor. ix. 9 Paul denies that this can be the intention of the Holy Spirit. '*Doth God*,' he says, '*take care for oxen? Or doth He say it altogether for our sakes?*' The latter, he asserts, in spite of the fact that one of the most beautiful traits of the Book of Deuteronomy is the tenderness with which it makes provision for animals. Professor Findlay's attempt to prove that Paul is merely extracting the moral essence of the Deuteronomic injunction, fails to explain the very definite language of the verse (*Expositor's Greek Testament*, ii. p. 848).

such as His Creative Power and His Providence—are there illustrated to an extent for which the brief space of the New Testament leaves no room. Not less than the Apostles will the Church continue to find faith and every virtue exemplified in the heroes of Israel.

But along with this warrant of the permanent religious value of the Old Testament, Christ and His Apostles have nowhere bound the Church either to obedience to all its laws, or to belief in all its teaching. On the contrary, our Lord Himself has set us the example of a great Discrimination. He came not only to do the Law, but to judge the Law, and while there are parts of it which He renounced by simply leaving them silently behind Him, there are other parts upon which He turned with spoken condemnation. He did not allegorise or spiritualise them as has always been the manner of some of His followers, bound to the letter of Scripture and seeking to escape the consequences of their bondage by thus compromising with the truth; but He strictly condemned them. And this Discrimination of our Lord between what was binding in the Law and what was not, has for us consequences not merely moral but intellectual as well. For the judgement, which both He and His Apostles often emphasised, that in Old Testament laws and institutions, ideals and tempers, there is very much which was rudimentary and therefore of transient worth and obligation, opens up the whole question of the development of revelation and justifies what is so large a part of modern criticism, — the effort, namely, to fix the historical order of the Old Testament writings and to define the stages by which the primitive revelation of God to men was carried onward and upward to its summit in Christ Himself. Besides, Christ's attitude to the Law reminds us that similar opposition exists within the Old Testament itself, between the ethical teaching of the Prophets and the priestly conceptions of religion. The determination of these two conflicting tendencies in the development of Israel's faith is another of the offices of Criticism.

But the Apostles go further. Although unable to free themselves from the strict views of inspiration which the Jewish schools enforced and which seem to preclude all liberty of criticism, their practical use of the Old Testament only serves to suggest how clamant the need of criticism is — and that in every department of criticism which the modern Church has developed. Is it the question of the Canon? The New Testament writers bequeath that question to the Church; making it by their quotations from extra-canonical writings a more difficult one than it is with the Jewish doctors themselves. Is it the question of the Text? Their use of the Septuagint raises that question in every possible detail. Is it the question of the interpretation of the Text? Some of their interpretations, as we have seen, are a direct challenge to our sense of truth to discover what the Old Testament writers actually intended, apart from the meanings, which temporary and often false fashions of exegesis put upon their words.

In short, the New Testament treatment of the Old not only bequeaths to the Church the liberty of Criticism, but along many lines the need and obligation of Criticism: not only delivers us once for all from bondage to the doctrine of the literal inspiration and equal divinity of all parts of the Old Testament, but prompts every line of research and discussion along which the modern criticism of the Old Testament has been conducted. The task, therefore, of the following Lectures is a double one: to inquire, first, whether this criticism has been true to the liberty which the New Testament sanctions, and serviceable in solving the problems which the New Testament raises; and second, whether, in this loyalty and in this service, modern criticism has conserved or has imperilled that permanent religious value of the Old Testament which Christ and His Apostles so fully enforced. In other words, we have to examine how far the freedom and thoroughness of Criticism during this century have affected our belief in the Old Testament as the revelation of

God, the prophecy of Jesus Christ, and the example and proof of faith.

Before we begin this inquiry some preliminary recollections are necessary. The Christian Church has twice over forgotten the liberty wherewith Christ has made her free; and in two directions has attempted to enforce the literal acceptance of the Old Testament, with results, in both cases, disastrous to the interests of religion.

We are all aware that at various periods in the history of Christendom a spirit arose amongst its leaders not very different from that which moved so large a party in the primitive Church, and even some of the Apostles themselves, to insist upon the letter of the Law of Moses as binding upon all Christians. In later ages the representatives of this spirit did not propose, as those Jewish Christians did, to enforce circumcision, sacrifice and other items of the Mosaic ritual; but in the same temper of literal obedience to the Old Testament they effected what was even worse. They revived many of the rigours of the Law, and quoted the most cruel tempers of the old dispensation, as the sanction of their own bigotries and persecutions. No branch of the Church has been innocent of this disloyalty to her Lord. If the tyrants and inquisitors of the Roman Church, in the days of its imperial power, have claimed the relentlessness of the old law as authority for their unspeakable cruelties to those whom they deemed heretics, our own Puritan fathers, on both sides of the Atlantic, have not hesitated to defend their intolerance of opinions which differed from their own, their purchase and holding of slaves, their harshness to criminals, and their torture and murder of witches by an appeal to the laws and customs of Israel. One is not sure whether the evil is even yet dead. A mitigated but very pregnant expression of it has just been uncovered in a letter by John Henry Newman of date 1875. Speaking of the cruelties of the Inquisition he says:

> 'As to Dr. Ward in the *Dublin Review*, his point (I think) was not the question of cruelty, but whether persecution, such as in Spain, was *unjust;* and with the capital punishment prescribed in the Mosaic Law for idolatry, blasphemy, and witchcraft and St. Paul's transferring of the sword to Christian magistrates, it seems difficult to call persecution (so-called) *unjust.* I suppose in like manner he would not deny, but condemn the *craft* and *cruelty* and the wholesale character of St. Bartholomew's massacre; but still would argue in the abstract in defence of the magistrate's bearing of the sword and of the Church's sanctioning of its use in the aspect of justice, as Moses, Joshua, and Samuel might use it against heretics, rebels, and cruel and crafty enemies.'[1]

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[1] *Contemporary Review*, Sept. 1899, p. 362: A letter from John Henry Newman to J. R. Mozley, of date April 4, 1875.

The spirit, then, lives, though the flesh be weak! Taking this remarkable document along with the utterances of Protestant divines of forty years ago in the Southern States in defence of slavery, we may partly understand why — not the Old Testament, as Professor Goldwin Smith has ignorantly judged but — the literal enforcement of the Old Testament, in disloyalty to Christ, should be called 'a millstone about the neck of Christianity.' From the first generation of the Church to the last but one, the theory of the equal and lasting divinity of the Jewish Scriptures has been fertile in casuistry, bigotry and cruel oppression of every kind.

But while all that is now mainly a matter of historical interest, we have suffered in our own generation, and to a high degree still suffer, from the enforcement of the same spirit, operating in another direction. The advocates and agents of Biblical Criticism have often been charged with the creation of sceptics, and we may fully admit that where criticism has been conducted in a purely empirical spirit and without loyalty to Christ, it has shaken the belief of some in the fundamentals of religion, distracted others from the zealous service of God, and benumbed the preaching of Christ's gospel. Yet any one who has had practical dealings with the doubt and religious bewilderment of his day can testify that those who have been led into unbelief by modern criticism are not for one moment to be compared in number with those who have fallen from faith over the edge of the opposite extreme. The dogma of a verbal inspiration, the dogma of the equal divinity of all parts of Scripture, the refusal to see any development either from the ethnic religions to the religion of Israel, or any development within the religion of Israel itself — all these have had a disastrous influence upon the religious thought and action of our time. They have not only produced confusion in some of the holiest minds among us. They have not only paralysed the intellects of those who have adopted them, as every mechanical conception of the truth must do. But they have been the provocation to immense numbers of honest hearts to cast off religion altogether. Men have been trained in the belief that the holiest elements of our creed, nay the assurance of the existence and love of God Himself, are bound up with the literal acceptance of the whole Bible, of which the Old Testament forms by much the greater part; so that whenever their minds awoke to the irreconcileable discrepancies of the Old Testament text, or their consciences to the narrow and violent temper of its customs, and they could no longer believe in it, as the equal and consistent message of God to men, their whole faith in Him, suspended from their earliest years upon this impossible view of it, was in danger of failing them, and in innumerable cases did fail them for the rest of their lives.

Like every man who has read a little and thought a little, I was aware of this great and tragic commonplace of our day. But during the last year I have come across so many instances of it — each the story of a human soul — that it has become vivid and burning in my mind. It has been my privilege to go carefully through the correspondence of one, who probably more than any of our contemporaries, was consulted by persons of the religious experience which I have described. Many address him from the silence and loneliness of those far margins of our world where men have not yet largely settled, and the few who come have leisure and detachment enough to think freshly upon the old ways in which they have been trained; but others are residents of the centres of civilisation, and their words are heavy with what I feel to be the greatest pathos of our life — the hunger of souls starving unconsciously within reach of the food they need. One and all tell how the literal acceptance of the Bible — the faith which finds in it nothing erroneous, nothing defective, and (outside of the sacrifices and Temple) nothing temporary — is what has driven them from religion. Henry Drummond was not a Biblical scholar; he was not an authority on the Old Testament. But the large trust which his personality and his writings so magically produced, moved men and women to address to him all kinds of questions. It is astonishing how many of these had to do with the Old Testament : with its discrepancies, its rigorous laws, its pitiless tempers, its open treatment of sexual questions, the atrocities which are narrated by its histories and sanctioned by its laws. Unable upon the lines of the teaching of their youth to reconcile these with a belief in the goodness of God, the writers had abandoned, or were about to abandon, the latter ; yet they eagerly sought an explanation which would save them from such a disaster.

I know no sadder tragedy than this innumerably repeated one, nor any service which it were better worth doing than the attempt to help men out of its perplexities. I firmly believe that such an attempt must lie along the lines indicated by Christ and His Apostles, and followed by the textual and historical criticism which takes its charter from Christ Himself. And if I am right, then we shall find in the task on which we have entered with this lecture, interests and responsibilities which are not merely scholastic or historical, but thoroughly evangelical —concerned with faith, and the assistance of souls in darkness, and the equipment of the Church of Christ for her ministry of God's Word.

# LECTURE II

## THE COURSE AND CHARACTER OF MODERN CRITICISM

We have seen that the treatment of the Old Testament by the New leaves us with a double result. In the first place, our Lord and His Apostles use the Hebrew Scriptures, and commit them to us as the living Word of God: the Revelation of His Nature and Providence, including in the latter His choice of Israel to be His 'Servant' to the world, His preparation for the advent of Christ, and His purposes of grace to all mankind. But in the second place, our Lord makes a great discrimination in His judgement of the Law and its ethical tempers, and teaches us to read the Old Testament as the record of a progressive revelation; while the Apostles bequeath to the Church unsolved all other problems of criticism, whether textual or historical. We must clearly recognise that our Lord did not count the whole of the Old Testament as equally Divine; that He set us an example of liberty in judging the facts which it presents to us; and that the Criticism with which we have to deal — whether it be the Lower Criticism or the Higher — is not the product of the modern mind, looking at the Old Testament alone, but that some of the problems arise in Christ's own treatment of the Hebrew Scriptures, and that others leave the hands of His Apostles in an even more acute form than that in which they issue from the Old Testament itself.

Starting, then, from these our chief authorities, the task of the following lectures is a double one. We have to inquire: *first,* how far Modern Criticism, in the use of the liberty which Christ exemplified, has succeeded in solving the problems bequeathed to the Church; and *second,* whether in solving them Modern Criticism tends to impair or to fortify our belief that the Old Testament contains a real revelation of God. For us preachers the latter is the cardinal question; but the former is preliminary and indispensable to it. In this lecture I propose to give an account of the general course of Biblical Criticism during the last century. The best way of doing this will be by the examination of certain charges which have recently been made against the general methods of Criticism. In discussing these, I fear that I must describe a number of things which have been often described, and are well known to many of you; but the ignorance of them, which is still shown in some quarters, makes their repetition, however trite, an inevitable duty.

The charges made against modern criticism may be summed up under three heads.

*First*, that the modern criticism of the Old Testament is a movement of recent growth, and that its results are, therefore, precarious.

*Second*, that Old Testament criticism proceeds only on linguistic and literary evidence, which, being estimated by modern tastes and standards, must be largely subjective and uncertain.

*Third*, that critics ignore the evidence of archæology, geography and the allied sciences; and that this is hostile to their conclusions.

### I. *The General Course of Modern Criticism.*

Many of the opponents of Old Testament criticism have represented the movement as if it were but the growth of yesterday, with results so hastily and arbitrarily reached that they are certain to be reversed by the discoveries and debates of to-morrow — like Jonah's gourd, the son of a night, in a night they shall perish! If this were so we might at once abandon the task we have set ourselves. It would not be worth our attention to examine the effect of a movement so sudden and precarious upon the Church's age-long attitude to the greater part of her sacred writings. But the science of Old Testament criticism is not the thing of yesterday which its assailants pretend. Even within its modern development — which is all we have got to do with just now — it covers a period of more than two hundred years. It has achieved a career, that is to say, as long as those of many of the historical and physical sciences. Nor, within the last century at least, has it been served by a less constant succession of able experts; while its methods have been equally without dogmatic bias, and so far as their materials go, as trustworthy and exact. Consequently the progress of the science has resembled that of every other intellectual movement of our time which has issued in generally accepted results. It has been slow, gradual and severely contested. It has suffered from digressions, pedantries, extravagancies. It has been forced to abandon some positions which it had previously occupied with confidence: and upon innumerable details it still exhibits among its supporters difference of opinion. But with few or no preconceptions, it has started from facts easily ascertained within the sacred text itself; each step forward which it has taken has been planted on other facts in the same field or upon reasonable inferences from these. It has suffered from, and has benefited by, the personal jealousies and ambitions of its agents, who have left few fresh proposals or discoveries undisputed: and it has issued in a large and increasing agreement upon certain main lines of conclusion.

Let us look for a little at the details.[1] The modern criticism of the Old Testament may be said to have begun in 1680. In that year a French priest called Simon drew attention to the fact that within the Book of Genesis the same event is often described in different words. He emphasised especially the two accounts of the Creation, which lie side by side in the opening chapters, and the two accounts of the Flood which are fused together in chapters vi–ix. For these Simon suggested different authors, whose writings Moses had put together. Such was the beginning of the criticism of the Pentateuch. You will observe not only how simple it is and how easily verified, but that also, so far from its motive being a prejudice against the Mosaic authorship of the first Book of the Bible, it took this for granted. Notice particularly that it starts from *the fact of two accounts of the same events*. It is on the presence of many such 'doublets' in the Hexateuch and historical books that the modern criticism of the Old Testament is based.

Seventy years after Simon another Frenchman,

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[1] The English reader will find full accounts of these in Cheyne's *Founders of Old Testament Criticism*, or in a more summary form so far as Hexateuchal criticism is concerned in the introductions to Addis's *Documents of the Hexateuch*: Nutt, London, vol. i. 1892, vol. ii. 1898.

Astruc, published his *Conjectures on the Original Memoirs of which it appears Moses made use in composing the Book of Genesis.*[1] That is the full title of his work, and it also proves how independent was the literary criticism of Genesis of any desire to deny the Mosaic, or ancient origin of the Book. After dividing the two narratives of the Creation as Simon had done, Astruc pointed out that each of them had a distinguishing mark. The first, Genesis i.–ii. 4*a* always speaks of the Creator as Elohim, the Hebrew term for God; the second, Genesis ii. 4*b*–iii. calls Him Jahweh or Jahweh-Elohim, the name of Israel's national deity. Again we have a simple fact which any reader can test for himself.

Had this difference between the Divine Names stood by itself, its discovery would have led to nothing but confusion; because the texts have often been copied, and, as any one may see from a comparison of the most ancient versions with the Hebrew, the copying scribes sometimes substituted the one Divine Name for the other. Besides, there were occasions in the course of the narrative, which usually employs the national name Jahweh, to substitute for this the more general title Elohim, as for instance when the writer is treating of the essential character of God or is introducing the statements of persons who were not Israelites and who did not know God as Jahweh. The distinction, therefore, between the Divine Names is too precarious to determine a distinction of authorship. But shortly before 1780 Eichhorn, a German Hebraist, who had arrived independently at Astruc's conclusion, confirmed and corrected its results by another discovery. He showed that the difference in the name of the Deity was accompanied by several other linguistic variations. The passages which use Elohim speak of Him as *creating* the world, and talk of *the beasts of the earth;* the passages which usually employ the name Jahweh speak of Him as *making* or *forming* the world, and talk of *the beasts of the field.* These are but two instances out of many: Eichhorn had struck a line of differences too numerous and too distinctive to prove fallacious. This, however, was not final: a few years later, in 1798, Ilgen, another German, observed that within those parts of Genesis in which Elohim was used there are also double accounts of the same event, which can be distinguished from each other by differences of style and vocabulary. Ilgen is therefore called the discoverer of the Second Elohist.

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[1] Brussels, 1753: x. and 525 pages 12mo.

Now it was natural that since the main distinction among these documents lay in the name of the Deity used by each, that distinction should not at first have been explored beyond the sixth chapter of Exodus where God reveals Himself under the name Jahweh, for up to this point there is an obvious reason why the Elohist documents should refrain from using the name Jahweh. But another and independent line of criticism had already been started which was carrying the discrimination of the documents farther on. One of the representatives of this — perhaps the originator — was a Roman Catholic priest, a Scotsman, called Geddes.[1] That remarkable man did not work on the lines laid down by the critics I have mentioned. Where they, struck by the different names for Deity, distinguished two or three documents, Geddes, confused by the presence of a large variety of differences and discrepancies, which he did not stop to classify, rushed to the conclusion that these were proofs of a great number of independent sources. This Fragmentary Hypothesis, as it was called, was taken up in Germany by Vater. So far as it affirmed the presence of many documents it did not at the time contribute to the progress of criticism in that direction,[2] but because the boldness of its authors did not confine it to Genesis and the first six chapters of Exodus it opened the way to the analysis of the rest of the Pentateuch and even of Joshua.[1]

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[1] See his *Life*, etc., by John Mason Good; London, 1863. His O. T. work is entitled *The Holy Bible . . . faithfully translated from corrected texts of the originals, with various Readings, Notes, and Critical Remarks*; two vols., London, 1792–97. *Critical Remarks on the Hebrew Scriptures:* vol. i., *Pentateuch*, 1800.

[2] Yet the justness of much of the reasoning connected with this hypothesis has been proved by more recent scholars; see below.

From 1805 onwards De Wette demonstrated the singularity of Deuteronomy both as regards its doctrine and its style; a singularity so conspicuous even to the tyro in Hebrew that the absence of an earlier discovery of it now seems astonishing. Not only the favourite phrases and formulas, the favourite interests and ideals, of this Book, but its treatment of the same events, and its laws for the same matters are so different from those of preceding parts of the Pentateuch,[2] as to prove beyond all doubt difference of authorship and date. Here, then, is a fourth document. Next, Bleek, who had been partly anticipated by Geddes, proved that the Book of Joshua forms an indispensable supplement to the Pentateuch by carrying on the history and enforcing the legislation of the latter — not on one line but to different degrees on all the lines, sometimes conflicting, of the four documents. Then from the beginning of Genesis to the end of Joshua the attempt was made to disentangle these documents by Ewald. And ultimately — to pass over several intermediate confirmations of the main lines of analysis — Hupfeld[1] arrived independently at Ilgen's conclusions about the two Elohists, and established them upon a sounder basis. He took, for instance, the well-known double accounts of the origin of the names Bethel and Israel. One of these (Gen. xxxv. 9–15) relates that Elohim appeared to Jacob as he came out of Padan-aram, and that, therefore, Jacob called the name of the place Beth-el or *house of God;* but the other (Gen. xxviii. 10–22) relates that God appeared to Jacob at the same place on his departure for Padan-aram, and that it was at this earlier time that the place was named Bethel: in conformity with which God, when He appears to Jacob in Padan-aram, calls Himself the God of Bethel (Gen. xxxi. 13). Again, according to Genesis xxxii. 23–33, the name Israel was first given to Jacob when he wrestled with the Unknown on the banks of Jabbok; and it was then said: *thou shalt no more be called Jacob.*[2] But in Genesis xxxv. 9–15 the origin of the name Israel is dated at Bethel on Jacob's return from Padan-aram. These are only two of several variations, not only of style but of substance, which prove the presence in the story of Jacob of two documents both using the name Elohim. Hupfeld made an even more important observation. He remarked that these two Elohist documents are not so closely related to each other as one of them is to the Jahwist. This one, which he calls the Second Elohist, differs from the Jahwist generally only in details — though also in certain conceptions of the Deity — and is so interwoven with the latter that the two are often indistinguishable and were evidently combined before being attached either to the First Elohist or to the Deuteronomic writer. The First Elohist, on the other hand, has a character all its own. Of the bulk of the Hexateuch it supplies by far the greater part; of the plan which runs through the Hexateuch[1] it is the upholding frame. Hence it has been called the Grundschrift or Basal Document; but because it contains the larger part of the legislation, and that part is distinguished from the rest by an elaboration of laws concerning the priesthood and ritual, it is now more usually called the Priestly, while the name Elohist is reserved for Hupfeld's Second Elohist.

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[1] For Geddes's share in extending the process to Joshua, see article 'Joshua' by the present writer in Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*.

[2] For details I must refer the reader to the introduction to Driver's *Commentary;* Moore's article in the *Encyclopædia Biblica;* and Ryle's in Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*.

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[1] In *The Sources of Genesis* (*Die Quellen d. Genesis*), 1850.

[2] It is not quite certain whether this narrative is from the Elohist or the Jahwist. The divine name is Elohim, but there are other parts in the style which lead many to attribute it to the Jahwist. See below on the acknowledged impossibility of always discriminating between the Jahwist and Elohist.

Before the middle of the century, then, the main lines of the analysis of the Hexateuch were laid down, and all the effect of subsequent criticism has been to confirm and develop them. The evidence that there are four main documents has been revised and the conclusion corroborated by a large number of independent scholars in several countries and schools of Christendom. Kuenen and others in Holland; Graf, Wellhausen, Nöldeke, Dillmann, Kautzsch, Stade, Budde, Holzinger and others in Germany; Westphal and others in France; Robertson Smith, Cheyne, Driver, Addis, Bennett, Ball, Ryle, Estlin Carpenter and Harford-Battersby in Great Britain; Briggs and Bacon in America, have all made detailed analyses of the whole or of parts of the Hexateuch; and their conclusions have been adopted, or independently verified, by others who have not published detailed analyses but have studied and written on the subjects contained in the Hexateuch: as for instance a large band of contributors to Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*[1] and to the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. It cannot be of chance nor by arbitrariness that among so large a majority of experts, working independently of each other, and in face of continual criticism from scholars on the other side, there should result an agreement of opinion so strong, so surely growing, and so widely based on the phenomena of the sacred text itself. Every position asserted has in turn been contested: in every case the evidence has been several times analysed; and one by one conservative scholars like Delitzsch, who had at first resisted the conclusions, have in the end expressed their adherence to them. From the nature of the materials much uncertainty, of course, must prevail. Purely philological evidence, where it alone is available, is often ambiguous: but as we shall see in the next section of this Lecture, the philological is only one department of the evidence. Difference of style or of language is in most cases accompanied by difference of substance, and the judgements which arise on the latter cannot be due to modern literary tastes or standards.

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[1] This is more true of Genesis to Deuteronomy than of Joshua.

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[1] See especially the article 'Hexateuch' by F. H. Woods.

We have seen[1] that the theory of the composition of the Hexateuch from four documents had one rival, the theory of composition from many fragments. There was also another theory, that of expansion; or the enlargement of a small kernel of tradition by successive additions and revisions from later stages of the national memory and religious development. Both of these theories have received some justification from the more recent elaboration of the documentary theory. For within each of the four documents further examination has discovered certain smaller variations of language, but still more of substance, which make it probable that the documents contain later additions in the style characteristic of each, and that thus they represent not the work of the same author so much as that of the same

[1] Above, p. 36.

school of tradition and religious conception.[1] Then, as there are four documents, and as it is evident that two of them, the Jahwist and Elohist, were combined before the others were added, this implies more than one editor, whose additions and modifications are to be expected and, where possible, distinguished. Of the presence of such minor distinctions, the present state of the text affords many clear signs; and that the process of revising and adding continued a very long time is proved by a comparison of the Hebrew with the oldest versions into other languages. Here the work of the critic is necessarily extremely delicate, and the results are often uncertain. But the uncertainties do not involve more than the fringes of the four main documents and their principal constituents. Upon these, by facts which are obvious to every student, by methods that are thorough and exact, through much debate and jealous revision, there has gradually been produced among critics a most remarkable unanimity.

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[1] To go into the details of this more delicate and therefore precarious criticism of recent years is impossible in the limits of a single lecture. But some particulars may be given in a note. For fuller details the English reader may be referred to the article 'Hexateuch' in Hastings's *Bible Dictionary;* and, so far as Deuteronomy is concerned, to Driver's introduction to his *Commentary* and to the forthcoming edition by the present writer of the text and translation of that book in Haupt's *Sacred Books of the Old Testament.* In the Jahwist document the stories of early humanity and the growth of civilisation contain some discrepancies which betray different sources.—In Deuteronomy there has long been a division of opinion as to how much, if any, of the prefatory introductions, 1–11, belong to the same author as that of the legal codes; and within the latter parallel and slightly differing laws are found on the same subject. In the year 1894 the analysis of Deuteronomy took a new direction on the publication of Stärk's and Steuernagel's investigations into the use of the singular and plural forms of address in that Book. In some passages Israel is addressed as *thou*, in some as *you*. The data are extremely puzzling because the text is often uncertain where those pronouns occur, and because the Hebrew idiom permits the same writer or speaker to pass from the one to the other. But where the change coincides with

So much for the analysis of the first six Books of the Old Testament. The Historical Books stand next in order. Some of them, for example the Books of Kings, explicitly assert that they have been composed from several sources; all of them present on the surface the same features as

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other changes in the style or religious conception, there is manifestly a strong reason for supposing a difference of author. Not only is such coincidence frequent in Deuteronomy both in the hortatory sections and the laws, but while both the passages in the singular address and those in the plural have terms and conceptions in common, they have some consistently different term for the same event or object, and each in addition has a list of words peculiar to itself and a list of favourite interests different from that of the other. It seems to me, therefore, that the case for two sources in Deuteronomy, thus distinguished, is, if not proved, very probable; and that it will supplant the older distinction between the hortatory and legal sections on which critics were always divided. But Stärk and Steuernagel, while striking on a true distinction, have not corrected their analysis of it in Deuteronomy by comparison with its appearance in the contemporary Jeremiah and other writers. The same objection seems to me to be valid against Mitchell's simpler analysis in the American *Journal of Biblical Literature* for 1899.—In the Priestly Legislation, Lev. i. 17–26 has long been regarded by critics as distinct in character and style from the rest of the code. (See Driver, *Introd. to Lit. of Old Testament*, 49 ff.): and in the latter many obviously later additions appear.

the Hexateuch: that is to say, not only differences of style but the presence of double accounts of the same event. In the Books of Samuel this latter feature is present to a still greater degree than in the narratives of the Hexateuch; but it is not so possible to discern in the Books of Samuel all the main documents which run through the history from beginning to end. What is clear is, that the historical Books contain many records and traditions, some of them treating the same events with differences both of style and substance.[1] Equally evident is the hand of the editor or editors who compiled them, and who not only added various statistics and recurrent formulas designed to frame them into a continuous history, but placed the whole of that history under a certain moral judgement, to which expression is given in language distinct from that of the materials he employed.[2] And again, as in the case of the Hexateuch, these conclusions have been reached only as the result of long research and debate by many critics, who, differing in details, have gradually approached unanimity upon the main lines just indicated.

The analysis of the prophetical and of the poetical Books presents us with greater difficulties. The process is not so old nor quite so thorough as in the case of the Hexateuch, and upon some of the results there is a still wider divergence of opinion. Within the last ten years the dissection of several prophetical books has been carried to an extent which represents rather the ingenuity of a few critics than the settled consensus of the majority. But, excepting these latest proposals as still under judgement, we observe the same tendency in criticism as we have already noted: the steady approximation to the belief that many of the larger books of prophecy are compilations from several sources. For this the evidence is partly that of language and style — it has become very clear that many terms and grammatical forms were not in use till towards the Exile — but the most cogent proofs are drawn from the expression of opposite religious tempers. Both in the larger and smaller prophecies there are obvious interpolations. Generations subsequent to the original prophet made qualifications of, or additions to, his oracles, in order to adapt them to the changed circumstances or altered tempers of the people, and so to perpetuate their religious significance. To this subject we shall return in a later Lecture.

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[1] *E.g.* the accounts of the institution of the Kingdom, of the meeting of Saul and David, and of the end of Saul.

[2] See further below, pp. 65 f.

The critical analysis of the Old Testament is therefore not only a movement of considerable age, and pursued by a long and varied succession of experts; but by rational methods and upon intelligible evidence, derived from the sacred text, it has produced certain large results on which the vast majority of critics are more and more approaching to unanimity. There is, therefore, no ground either for those who attack the science of Old Testament criticism as hasty and its conclusions as raw; or for those who predict a reaction from the conclusions as certain as the reaction which arose in New Testament criticism against the theories of the extreme Tübingen school. The Tübingen theories were largely deductions from the principles of a certain philosophy of history. But the proofs of Old Testament criticism are not *à priori*: the argument is inductive and the facts are furnished by the Old Testament itself.[1]

## II. *The Criticism of the Old Testament mainly Historical.*

The criticism of the Old Testament, however, is not merely literary; and here we have to meet the second charge which its opponents have preferred against it.[2] In their recent writings Professors Sayce and Hommel have, with considerable persistence, represented the Higher Criticism as if it were only the analysis of the text of the Old Testament into different documents upon the evidence of language and style. And they assert that the evidence alleged cannot but be precarious, because estimated by scholars with very different tastes and standards from those of the people among whom the Old Testament arose. Nothing could be further from the truth. Look at what we have already seen with regard to the discrimination of the documents. We have seen that this depends not only upon differences of vocabulary, phrase and idiom, but still more upon differences of fact and substance in narratives which relate the same events.

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[1] It is indeed striking that the attempt to prove the late date of the Levitical legislation from principles of the Hegelian philosophy, which Vatke made in 1833, should have been ignored in the history of criticism; and that that late date should not have been accepted till Graf and others proved it by *inductive evidence* in 1866 and following years.

[2] See above, p. 31.

Take the different stories of the origin of the name of Bethel.[1] It is impossible to believe that these came from the same hand. Or take the Book of Joshua. Throughout its chapters there are visible two differing accounts of the conquest of Western Palestine by the Israelites. One of them represents the conquest and division of the land to have been thorough and effected in one generation by the whole people acting together; the other represents it as the work of the tribes acting separately, and as being far from complete. Here are differences of fact, which are not dependent for their distinction upon differences of phrase and idiom; yet are corroborated by these, for the parts of the Book which represent the Conquest as complete under Joshua are composed in the language of the Deuteronomic and Priestly writers,[1] while those who report it to have been incomplete are written in the style of the Jahwist.[2] But that is not all. I have already said that a linguistic analysis is often unable to distinguish between the Jahwist and the Elohist, and this is especially the case in the Book of Joshua. All the more striking therefore are certain differences of fact in this double document. For instance, in the story of the crossing of the Jordan, as told in Joshua iii. and iv., there are two accounts of the monument set up to commemorate the passage. One of them builds it at Gilgal on the west bank with stones taken from the river-bed by the people;[3] the other builds it in the bed of the river with twelve stones set there by Joshua.[4] Similarly, in chapter vi. two stories have been interwoven, but are still distinguishable: one which relates how Israel marched round Jericho on seven successive days, the first six they marched in silence, but on the seventh they shouted *at the word of*

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[1] See above, p. 38.

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[1] *E.g.* x. 28–43, xi. 2, 3, 6, 9–12, 14–23, xii. xiii. 2–12, 14, xxi. 43–45, xxii. 1–15, xxiii. — Deuteronomic: and xiv. 1–5, xv. (except 13–19 and 63), xvi. 4–8, xvii. 1*a*, 3–7, 9 (partly), 10, xviii. 11*a*, 12–28, xix. 1–46, 48, 51 — Priestly.

[2] xv. 63, xvi. 10, xvii. 11–18, with which agrees the account of a partial conquest in Judges i.

[3] iv. 1–8, 20.

[4] iv. 9.

*Joshua* and the walls fell;[1] and another which relates that a portion of the armed men marched round the city seven times on the same day, having in their midst the ark, and that on the seventh round the people shouted *at the signal of the trumpets* and the walls fell.[2] Similarly in chapter viii. we find two accounts of the ambush against Ai, according to one of which the ambush consisted of 30,000 men and was despatched to its position by Joshua either from Gilgal or soon after the main army left Gilgal; while according to the other the ambush consisted of 5000 men and was not detached from the army till the latter had arrived in the neighbourhood of Ai.[3] The existence of all these 'doublets' is not, I repeat, proved by differences of vocabulary or of style, for we are generally unable to say which is from the Jahwist and which from the Elohist; it is proved by difference of facts in the substance of the narrative.

Hitherto I have dealt only with the proofs of the presence of different documents in the

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[1] Verses 3, 7*a*, 10, 11 (partly), 14, 15*a*, *and it came to pass . . . manner*, 15*b*, 20, *and the people shouted.*

[2] Verses 4 (partly), 5, 7*b*, 8, 9, parts of 13 and 15, 16*a*, 20*b*. Cf. especially verses 16 and 20: in the latter the people shout both before and after the trumpets, though verse 16 enjoins on them not to shout till the trumpets give the signal. Wellhausen was the first to point out the distinction.

[3] The first account can be traced in verses 3–9; the second in verses 10–14. For the analysis of the two accounts through the rest of the chapter, see Bennett's 'Joshua' in Haupt's *Sacred Books of the Old Testament.*

Hexateuch. But now let us look at the problem of the dates of these documents. Here again the evidence for the critical solution is not altogether that of language and style. On the contrary, historical evidence has been predominant at every step of the argument: and in particular has decided almost by itself the principal change of opinion which criticism has made on this subject. At first the Jahwist-Elohist and the Deuteronomic documents were assigned, on account of their historical allusions, to a date after the beginning of the Monarchy; but the Priestly Document, which has many archaic features and which betrays no allusion to the later history, was considered the earliest of the four. It was the introduction of other phenomena, historical in character, which forced critics to abandon this opinion and to seek for the Priestly Document a much later date. The change came about upon two lines of reasoning. The first was this. When the collections of laws which the documents contain were compared, it was seen that they exhibited different stages of what was fundamentally the same legislation; the simplest of these stages is found in the Jahwist-Elohist,[1] the next in Deuteronomy,[2] the most complex and elaborate in the Priestly Writing.[3] Or, as this way of putting the matter does scant justice to the differences, we may say that while the legislation in the Jahwist-Elohist is suited to a purely agricultural people, the Deuteronomic meets the necessities of a community more highly organised and equipped, with foreign relations and subject to religious temptations to which in the days of the early kings Israel was not exposed; while, besides, there is in Deuteronomy's modification of the Jahwist-Elohist laws evidence of the influence of the eighth-century prophets. The Priestly Legislation on the other hand cannot be understood in many of its provisions except in the light of the Exile, and of the greater influence which the priesthood assumed in Israel after the return from Babylon. On the subjects of sacrifice, the priesthood, the gifts due to the priests and kindred matters, there is an almost perfectly consistent increase of elaboration and rigour from the laws of the Jahwist-Elohist, through those of Deuteronomy to those of the Priestly Legislation.[1] I am not now defending the conclusion to which most critics adhere, that therefore the Jahwist-Elohist is the earliest of the Documents, and the Priestly the latest, Deuteronomy coming in between: I am only showing that critics reached that conclusion on historical evidence. Again, critics remarked the fact that the early history of Israel exhibited no traces of the influence or existence of any of the three legal codes, but that, on the contrary, the religious leaders of Israel from Gideon to Elisha behaved as if there were no such laws in existence as those (at least) of Deuteronomy and the Priestly code. Again I have no room to go into the detailed proof,[1] and my purpose is simply to point out the character of the evidence of which it consists.

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[1] Ex. xx.–xxii., xxxiv., 14–26.

[2] Deut. xii.–xxvi.

[3] Ex. xxv.–xxxi., Levit., Num. i.–xix.

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[1] For details see Driver's Commentary on Deuteronomy, chaps. xii.–xxvi.; or the present writer's notes to the same chapters in Haupt's *Sacred Books of the Old Testament*.

On both these lines of proof for the date of the documents, the evidence, therefore, is historical and is supplied by the Old Testament itself. It is, of course, supported by philological evidence. The language and the style of the Jahwist-Elohist are earlier than that of Deuteronomy; and both the ordinary vocabulary and the lists of proper names in the Priestly Writing exhibit many traces of a late date.[2] But all this is only corroboratory of a conclusion reached independently and upon the evidence of the sacred history itself. Let me repeat, this principal conclusion of modern criticism, — that the written Law of Israel, in the three forms in which we possess it, cannot have been the work of Moses or of the Mosaic, or immediately post-Mosaic, age, but must be assigned to a much later date, — has been reached not by the methods of literary analysis, but on lines of historical evidence furnished by the earlier chronicles of Israel themselves.

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[1] See the introductions to Driver's Commentary on Deuteronomy, and to Addis's *Documents of the Hexateuch.*

[2] G. B. Gray, *Studies in Hebrew Proper Names:* London, 1896.

Let us now take a similar instance from the prophets. The opponents of criticism have often alleged that the conclusion, by which Isaiah xl. and following chapters are taken from Isaiah himself and assigned to a prophet on the eve of the Return from Exile, is due to a dogmatic prejudice against the capacity of Isaiah himself to predict events so far beyond his own time, and is supported mainly upon grounds of language and style. Neither of these allegations is correct. What has compelled critics to date Isaiah xl. and following chapters from the close of the Babylonian Captivity has been the historical evidence furnished by the chapters themselves. These chapters nowhere claim to be by Isaiah, and do not present a single reflection of his time. But they plainly set forth, as having already taken place, certain events which happened from a century to a century and a half after Isaiah had passed away: the Babylonian Exile and Captivity, the ruin of Jerusalem and the devastation of the Holy Land. Israel is addressed as having exhausted the time of her penalty, and is exhorted to leave Babylon, because the door of her deliverance is immediately to open, and as if her return to the Holy Land depended now upon herself. Cyrus is named as her deliverer, and is described as already called upon his career and blessed with victory by Jahweh. Nor is all this predicted as if from the standpoint of a previous century; but it is taken for granted as the very basis of the prophet's argument. Cyrus himself is not merely represented to be above the horizon and upon the flowing tide of victory, as a prophet might possibly realise him to be before he actually appeared. But he and his victories are appealed to as the unmistakeable proof that *former* prophecies of Israel's deliverance from Babylon are at last being fulfilled. Would it have been possible for the prophet to make such an appeal, either to Israel or to the heathen, unless Cyrus had been within the ken of them both? Unless Cyrus and his early victories were already historical facts, the whole argument in Isaiah xl.–xlviii. is unintelligible. You observe, then, that all this criticism which assigns these chapters to the eve of the Return from Exile is historical, and is independent of the literary analysis of the text, which, however, greatly corroborates it. Moreover, except for the date of Cyrus, which is determined by the cuneiform inscriptions, the historical evidence in question is drawn entirely from the Bible itself.

Let us take from the historical books one other example of the same method. There is no Book in the Old Testament, whose place in the Canon and whose value as a record of historical fact have been rendered more precarious by criticism than the Books of Chronicles. These two books, which are really one, include the same period, whose history is related in the Books of Samuel and of Kings. They treat many of the same episodes and of the same personalities. But they treat these with a great difference. For the details I must refer you to the article by Professor Francis Brown in Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*.[1] For our present purpose it is sufficient to point out that, when the parallel narratives in Samuel-Kings and in Chronicles are compared, it is found that the Chronicler has increased the numbers of the troops engaged in the campaigns described, of the men slain, and of the slaves, the cattle and the objects of value taken captive or brought as tribute to the victors; that he has enhanced the characters of some of the leading personalities, like David and Solomon; and that he has imputed to the period of the Monarchy the establishment and elaboration of all the ritual and the law enforced by the Priestly Document. This comparison with Samuel-Kings makes it at once evident that we cannot accept the Chronicler as an authority for the pre-exilic history of Israel, but must consider his Book as a homiletic treatment of that history from the standpoint of generations after the Exile, when the Priestly Legislation had so long been in force that it was impossible to imagine any part of Israel's history as without it.[1]

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[1] See also the article in the *Encyc. Biblica;* and Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, pp. 140 ff.

These are such fundamental and such obvious instances of the results of modern criticism upon the Old Testament that I am almost ashamed to bring them before you. But the repetition of them is rendered necessary, not only by the common opinion of a large portion of the Church, but by the assertions of scholars I have named and of a number of other writers, that modern criticism is mainly dependent upon the precarious methods of literary analysis. How amply the instances quoted disprove this, and how fully they discover the main conclusions of critics to be based upon historical evidence derived from the Old Testament itself, I do not require further to demonstrate.

## III. *Criticism and Archæology.*

Hitherto we have looked only at the evidence which criticism finds within the sacred records of Israel. But our century has been one not only of Biblical research, but of the discovery and examination of the histories and religions of the peoples who surrounded Palestine and who were one with ancient Israel in blood, custom and mental equipment. Sixty or seventy years ago almost our sole record for the history of the world, of which the kingdom of Israel formed a small province, was the Old Testament. But now — in Babylonia, Egypt and Phœnicia; in Bashan, Moab, Edom and Sinai; in Central and Southern Arabia — there have been unearthed and deciphered a vast multitude of monuments which not only afford us the most ample material for testing the chronology of the Old Testament, and defining the exact nature of many of the historical events in it, but which have uncovered to us the civilisation and religion of the tribes who were Israel's neighbours and Israel's kinsmen according to the flesh. With all this evidence we can compare, in Arabia and Syria, the still current life of tribes of the same race in the same natural environment. It will be obvious how all this archæology and ethnology must enable criticism to attack the chief of the problems bequeathed by the New Testament: the problem of tracing throughout the Old Testament a progressive revelation. That, however, forms the subject of another lecture; and I will now consider only the general attitude of recent criticism to all the historical and archæological evidence which has been gathered from fields outside the Old Testament.

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[1] Cf. Robertson Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 140.

Of recent years the conclusions of the Higher

Criticism have been attacked in the name of archæology, and by none with more persistence than the two eminent scholars I have named: Professor Sayce and Professor Hommel. They have asserted that 'archæology is on the side of tradition and not of the critics,'[1] upon the cardinal question of the Old Testament: the dates and composition of the Hexateuch. And, as proof of this, they have alleged what they call 'the reluctance of the critics to accept the discoveries of the archæologists.' Let us inquire what grounds there are for these charges.

Criticism, as we have seen, has discovered four main documents in the Hexateuch, which it has assigned to various dates from the ninth or eighth to the sixth or fifth centuries before Christ. Professor Sayce's argument appears to be that this conclusion is largely due to the critics' belief that the art of writing was not practised in Israel till about David's time, or the end of the eleventh century before Christ, and that till then legislation and tradition were only oral. In disproof of such a belief Professor Sayce appeals to the so-called Tell el Amarna letters. These clay tablets, which date from about 1400 B.C., or more than a century before the commonly received date of the Exodus, represent a frequent and detailed correspondence between the court of Egypt on the one hand and its representatives in Palestine and the rulers of the kingdoms of Mesopotamia on the other. The writing is in the cuneiform character, and the language that of Babylonia. The tablets, therefore, prove that some of the culture of Babylonia, perhaps even including its literature, had spread across the whole of Western Asia, at least a century before the Exodus. From this Professor Sayce infers that the Israelites, when in the land of Goshen and upon their wanderings through the Desert, must have known how to read and write, must have been acquainted with Babylonian literature, and must have been able to appreciate and make use of Babylonian documents, the translation of some of which he thinks can be identified in portions of the Book of Genesis.

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[1] Sayce, *Cont. Rev.*, vol. lxx., 1896, p. 730.

Now, in the first place, it is necessary to note that the Tell el Amarna letters are only the documents of high Egyptian or Mesopotamian officials, and of chiefs of settled tribes in Palestine; and that to argue from their habits to those of a semi-nomadic race, such as Israel were still in Goshen and the Desert, is not very safe.[1] But suppose we admit that the chiefs of Israel were in official contact with the Egyptian authorities during Israel's residence in Goshen, and that they did learn from their employment in the building operations of Pharaoh the arts of reading and writing which were so highly developed in Egypt. Suppose that we grant (and I for one am not inclined to deny this) that there were leaders in Israel at the time of the Exodus who could write, or have writings made for them, just as Abd-hiba of Jerusalem and other petty chieftains of Palestine did. We have not, therefore, proved that the documents which compose the Pentateuch were written in the time of Moses. We have not secured one iota of evidence to counterbalance the proofs, derived from the history of Israel itself, that the Pentateuchal legislation was not in existence in the time of the Judges or of the earlier Kings. Few critics have committed themselves to the absolute negative, that early Israel did not know how to write; nor do any of the arguments for the late date of the Hexateuch rest upon a reason which, even if it were probable, is so impossible to prove.

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[1] As has often been pointed out, the tribes which live to-day on the borders of Egypt and Canaan, half-settled and half-nomadic, do not, for all their contact with the civilised and half-civilised populations of these lands, learn to read and write. Reading and writing are arts, of which the Bedawee tribes do not see the need, and frequently despise. From the culture and habits of correspondence of the court of Egypt and its representatives in Canaan, it is very little less difficult to infer that the Israelite shepherds could write, than to employ the existence of the postal system

The other discoveries of archæologists which have to do with the Pentateuch are the Babylonian tablets — with stories of the Creation and

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and telegraph in the Turkish Empire and the dominions of the Khedive to illustrate the culture of the nomads in the deserts which lie on their borders.

Flood, or with annals which cover the events described in Genesis xiv.—and the Egyptian monuments which depict the conditions of life reflected in the story of Joseph. We have not now to consider how far the evidence furnished by all these proves the historical value of the Pentateuch. That question will come up in next Lecture. Our present inquiry is, how far the Babylonian and Egyptian monuments affect the conclusions of critics with regard to the dates of the Pentateuchal documents.

The Babylonian stories of the Creation and Flood were probably in existence by a very early date.[1] At the Oriental Congress in Paris in 1897 it was announced that Father Scheil had discovered on a tablet from Sippara of date about 2250 B.C. a recension of the Babylonian story of the Flood. This has evidently been copied from a still older tablet, for here and there the scribe has inserted the word 'lacuna.' The story of the Flood may, therefore, be carried back as far as 3000 B.C. But however early be its date or the dates of the various versions of the Creation-Epos, it is evident that they can have no bearing on the question of the dates of the Hebrew documents, — whether the Jahwist-Elohist or the Priestly, — which contain accounts of the Creation and Flood founded on the Babylonian. We are ignorant of the time at which the Hebrews received these stories; while in their Biblical form they exhibit so many differences from the Babylonian as to make it probable that the materials were used by the writers of the Pentateuchal documents only after long tradition within a Hebrew atmosphere.

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[1] In the British Museum we find them on tablets from the Royal Library at Nineveh of the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. See the newly issued *Guide to the Babylonian and Assyrian Collections* (1900), pp. 36 ff. For translations see *Records of the Past*, new series, vol. i. 122 ff., by Prof. Sayce; Gunkel's *Schöpfung u. Chaos*, pp. 401 ff. by Zimmern; and *Authority and Archæology*, ed. by D. G. Hogarth (London, 1899), pp. 10 ff.

Nor in the light which the monuments throw upon Genesis xiv. is there any evidence as to when that chapter was written. We are still without the proof that its accounts of Babylonian campaigns are confirmed by Babylonian annals dealing with the same events; and even if we had this proof, there would remain the possibility, for which there is some evidence, that Genesis xiv. is a Hebrew fragment from the Exile based on Babylonian materials. In any case this chapter cannot be used in the discussion of the critical conclusions as to the date of the four main constituents of the Hexateuch, for it lies outside them all.[1]

Again, the portrait of Egyptian life presented by the story of Joseph in the Jahwist-Elohist document has been appealed to, as proof that the writer lived at a time when Israel, from their long residence in Goshen, were still familiar with Egypt. But the life, which the story of Joseph portrays, was the life of Egypt not only in Joseph's time. In the same moulds it persisted for centuries after the Exodus, and under the Monarchy Israel had many opportunities of becoming acquainted with it. So that the vivid and accurate descriptions of Egypt, which surround the figure of Pharaoh's Hebrew vizier, are no conclusive proof of the ancient origin of the document which tells the story. On the contrary, the only Egyptian data in that story to which archæologists can attach an approximate age, appear to offer some confirmation of the late period to which critics have assigned the Jahwist-Elohist document. The Egyptian names Zaphenath-Pa'aneah, Potipherah, and Asenath belong to types of names which do not appear, or are not frequent, on the Egyptian monuments till some centuries after the Exodus.[1]

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[1] Full statements and discussions of the Babylonian evidence as to the names, etc., in Gen. xiv. will be found in Driver's *Authority and Archæology*, pp. 39 ff., and in article 'Chedorlaomer' in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. See below, p. 100.

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[1] The type to which Zaphenath-Pa'aneah belongs occurs first under the Twentieth Dynasty in the thirteenth century B.C., and is frequent only under the Twenty-second in the tenth century. The type to which Potipherah belongs appears in one instance under the Eighteenth Dynasty, though not then attached to a native Egyptian, and otherwise occurs first under the Twenty-second Dynasty, but is not frequent till the Twenty-sixth, 664–525 B.C. The type to which Asenath belongs has a few early instances, but is frequent only under the Twenty-first Dynasty, in the eleventh century and later.

From these facts, reached in complete independence of criticism, the Egyptologists 'Steindorff, Brugsch, and Ebers all agree in inferring that the names in question did not originate before the Ninth Century B.C.'[1] But if this be so, the only archæological evidence which proves anything with regard to the dates of the Hexateuchal documents points in the same direction as the critical arguments which assign the Jahwist-Elohist to the ninth or the eighth century.

Before we leave the Hexateuch let me call your attention to the fact that the critical theory of its compilation from several sources receives one strong confirmation from the archæological side. Professor Sayce himself admits that such a compilation is 'fully in accordance with the teachings of Oriental archæology,' which has shown us that the ancient writings of the neighbours and kinsfolk of Israel were also of a composite character. Let me quote his own words: 'The composite character of the Pentateuch, therefore, is only what a study of similar contemporaneous literature brought to light by modern research would lead us to expect.'[2] And it is remarkable that Professor Sayce, who has so strenuously assailed the conclusions of critics with regard to the Pentateuch, should admit that the Book of Joshua, the supplement and appendix of the Pentateuch, is a composite document with conflicting accounts of the conquest and settlement of Canaan.[1]

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[1] Driver, article 'Joseph' in Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*, ii. 775.

[2] *Monuments*, pp. 31, 34; cf. *History of the Hebrews*, p. 129.

Beyond the Hexateuch there is little necessity to follow the critics in their attitude to archæology. The critics cannot be charged with neglecting the long series of Assyrian annals which bear upon the history of the Kings of Israel and Judah, from Omri to Zedekiah. I need only point out how far these annals confirm the critical estimate of the Books of Kings. The earliest Hebrews named on the Assyrian monuments are Omri and Ahab; from them onwards we have among others the names of Ben-hadad, Ahab's Syrian contemporary, of Jehu, Hazael, Pekah, Ahaz and Hezekiah. Pestilences and eclipses are recorded, the tremors of which vibrate through the early prophetical books. We have an account of the invasion of Palestine by Tiglath Peleser, *when he brought into contempt the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, by the way of the sea across Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles;* the overthrow of Samaria by Sargon; Sennacherib's invasion of Syria, his appearances before Jerusalem, the tribute he exacted, and his disappearance northwards. But criticism has never doubted those names or these facts. It has recognised that the Books of Kings were compiled from true and in many cases contemporaneous annals. What critics have judged to be late and probably of less historic value has been certain narratives, for which archæology has no evidence to offer, as well as the framework, in which the editor has bound the whole history and supplied, out of a general scheme, a chronology, and, from the standpoint of a later age, a religious sentence on each monarch's reign.[1] Now, remarkably enough, archæology has confirmed this judgement of criticism on the Books of Kings, so far as regards the chronology. For while testifying to the reality of Omri, Ahab, Jehu, and some of their successors, as well as of the leading events of the history, it has shown from the contemporary Assyrian data that the chronology, approximately correct so far as the distance of one man or event from another is concerned, has been placed by the editor from one dozen to twenty years too early — obviously in order to fit it into the general system, adopted by the Hebrew editors, of reckoning the years from the Exodus to the fall of the first Temple and the Return from Exile.[2]

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[1] *History of the Hebrews*, ch. iv.; see above in this Lecture, pp. 47 f.

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[1] For this chronology see next Lecture. The moral and religious judgements of each reign are from the standpoint of Deuteronomy, which, as we have seen, did not come into force in Israel till 621 B.C. under King Josiah.

[2] See Kampfhausen, *Chronologie der hebraischen Könige*, 1883; Robertson Smith, *Prophets*, pp. 144 ff.

So much for archæology and its relations to criticism. 'The fact is,' as Professor Driver says,[1] 'the antagonism which some writers have sought to establish between criticism and archæology is wholly factitious and unreal. Criticism and archæology deal with antiquity from different points of view, and mutually supplement one another. Each in turn supplies what the other lacks; and it is only by an entire misunderstanding of the scope and limits of both that they can be brought into antagonism with one another. What is called "the witness of the monuments" is often strangely misunderstood. The monuments witness to nothing which any reasonable critic has ever doubted. . . . A great deal of the illustration afforded by the monuments relates to facts of language, to ideas, institutions, and localities; but these as a rule are of a permanent nature; and until they can be proved to be *limited* to a particular age their occurrence, or mention, in a given narrative is not evidence that it possesses the value of contemporary testimony.'

The alleged refutation of criticism by archæology may therefore be dismissed, and we pass to another which has been drawn from the sphere of geography. It is often maintained that the accuracy of the topographical data on the Book of Genesis is proof of the truthfulness of the narratives in which they appear. 'But,' as I have said elsewhere,[1] 'that a story accurately reflects geography does not necessarily mean that it is a real transcript of history — else were the Book of Judith the truest man ever wrote instead of being, what it is, a pretty piece of fiction. Many legends are wonderful photographs of scenery, and therefore let us at once admit that while we may have other reasons for the historical truth of the patriarchal narratives, we cannot prove this on the ground that their itineraries and place-names are correct.'

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[1] *Authority and Archæology*, p. 150 f.

On the other hand, for the same reason — that the topography of Palestine changed so little during the course of the history of Israel — it will be obvious that geography cannot be of much use in the support of the critical conclusions as to the dates of the documents. The only cases in which it can afford any evidence of these, are where documents, judged by critics to be late on other grounds, contain geographical names, or applications of geographical names, which are themselves of a late origin. For instance, the mountains of Moab are called in the Priestly Document, which recent critics date after the Exile, *the mountains of the Abarim.* Abarim means 'the men or things on the other side,' and there is some evidence that before the Exile the name was applied to the whole mountain-range east of Jordan.[1] But the post-Exilic writer limited it to the mountains of Moab, because in his day these were the only part of the eastern range which was opposite the shrunken territory of his people. Again, it appears that the name Euphrates occurs first in the writings of Jeremiah;[2] in the historical and prophetical books before his time we hear only of 'the River.'[3] Now look at the documents of the Hexateuch. In the Jahwist and Elohist, which critics date before Jeremiah, the stream is called 'the River'; in Deuteronomy (from Jeremiah's time) and in the Priestly Writing[4] (from the time of the Exile) it is called Euphrates. Such is the kind of small symptoms, which geography supplies, of the truth of the critical conclusions as to the date of the Hexateuchal documents. With regard to the literary analysis of these documents, the geographical evidence, though still not large, is quite as decisive. The same localities are called in the different documents by different names, and this with a remarkable consistence to which there are but one or two exceptions.[1]

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[1] *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, p. 108.

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[1] Jer. xxii. 20, R. V.; Ezek. xxxix. 11 (reading with Hitzig and others 'Abārîm' for 'Oberîm'). See further article 'Abarim' by the present writer in the *Encyclopædia Biblica.*

[2] Jeremiah xiii. 4-7.

[3] 2 Sam. viii. 3 (Kethibh), x. 16; 1 Kings iv. 21, 24 (Heb. v. 1, 4), xiv. 15; Isa. vii. 20; and even Jer. ii. 18, and Micah vii. 12.

[4] 'The River,' Gen. xxxi. 21 (J. E.); Exod. xxiii. 31; Num. xxii. 5; Josh. xxiv. 2 f. (all E.). 'The great River, the River Euphrates,' Gen. xv. 18 (D.) (Red, according to Ball); Deut. i. 7; Josh. i. 4 (D.); cf. Deut. xi. 24; 'Euphrates,' Gen. ii. 14 (P.); cf. Jer. xlvi. 2, 6, 10, li. 63; 2 Kings xxiii. 29, xxiv. 7; the gloss to 2 Sam. viii. 3; and in Chronicles and Apocrypha.

The geographical evidence, then, so far as it goes, does not contradict but supports the critical analysis of the documents and the critical conclusions as to their dates.

We have now examined the various charges made against the modern criticism of the Old Testament and have found them baseless. That criticism does not depend mainly on linguistic analysis, but still more on historical evidence furnished by the Old Testament itself: the conclusions are not refuted, but to a remarkable extent corroborated, by the evidence of archæology and geography. We have examined the methods and the general course of criticism. We have seen how thoroughly tested and how firmly based are its main results. But in truth no general account of the critical movement can do justice to its argument. In the case of the Hexateuch we must take the text itself and prove the critical analysis verse by verse. If we do so, we shall often indeed be puzzled by details, for which there is no complete explanation on any theory whatsoever. But gradually the characteristic phraseology, favourite interests, religious conceptions and historical traditions of four main documents will fall apart, all the more distinct that they often present the same subjects or events in different ways; and we shall be convinced that we are in touch, not with phantasms of modern scholarship, but with ancient realities — the original constituents of our curiously composite Scriptures. Discrepancies, fatal to the traditional theory, will explain themselves: the history, instead of being full of contradictions, will fall into the lines of a reasonable development, and the Divine education of Israel become more apparent than ever. The other subject of criticism — the exact dates of the different documents, *in the form in which we have them* — may not be so clear to us: we will sympathise with the difference of opinion about these that exists among critics themselves; and we will even keep in mind what some critics forget, that having fastened the present form of a document to an approximate date, we have not therefore prejudiced the question of the earlier origin of some of its contents.

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[1] *E.g.* for instance in the Jahwist and Priestly Documents the mountain of the Law is always *Sinai*, but in the Elohist and Deuteronomist always *Horeb*, as it is also in a narrative of 1 Kings, ch. xix., which is from the northern kingdom like the Elohist; and in Mal. iv. 2, in which prophet the influence of Deuteronomy is often felt. Notice that Deuteronomy xxxiii. 2, in which Sinai occurs, is assigned on other grounds to the Jahwist. Again, the mountain which Moses ascended in Moab is called *Pisgah* by the Elohist (Num. xxi. 20, xxiii. 14), and by the Deuteronomist (Deut. iii. 17, 27, iv. 49, xxxiv. 1 (?), Josh. xii. 3). Once perhaps the Priestly Writer uses the name (Josh. xiii. 20), but this instance may be Deuteronomic. The Priestly Writer names it *Nebo*. Again, the glen beneath Pisgah, in which Israel camped, before descending into the valley of the Jordan, is called *the glen that is in the field of Moab* by the Elohist (Num. xxi. 20), but in the Deuteronomist *the glen that is opposite Beth-peor* (Deut. iii. 29, iv. 46, xxxiv. 6). The Elohist calls the site of Israel's camp before crossing the Jordan *the field* or *territory of Moab* (Num. xxi. 20), but the Priestly Writer always speaks of it as the *plains* or *steppes of Moab*. Again, the Elohist gives one list of stations on Israel's route through Moab (Num. xxi. 13–20), the Priestly Writer gives another (Num. xxxiii. 44–49).

Reviewing the whole of this Lecture, we may say that Modern Criticism has won its war against the Traditional Theories. It only remains to fix the amount of the indemnity.

# LECTURE III

## THE HISTORICAL BASIS IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

In last Lecture I said that the battle of modern criticism with the traditional theories of the Old Testament had been fought and won; and that it only remains to discuss the indemnity. What do the results of criticism cost? To this question we must now address ourselves.

We have admitted the liberty and duty of criticism. We have found its methods reasonable and carefully wrought. We have seen that its main conclusions rest upon literary and historical facts furnished by the Old Testament itself, and are supported by the evidences of archæology and geography, so far as these go: that, in short, they are as solid as the results can be of a science at work upon so remote a period of history. We have now to ask, what does criticism leave to us in the Old Testament: how much true history and how much Divine Revelation? Of these two questions the chief, of course, is the latter, but as the answer to it partly depends on the answer to the former we must take that first: how much true history has criticism left to us in the Old Testament?

Though this is actually the less important of the two questions (for Revelation is not coincident with actual history[1]), I suspect that it is the one which the preacher or teacher of to-day finds the more urgent and embarrassing. He remembers how through the Old Testament our fathers pursued their expositions and homilies, unhampered by any doubt of the events or personalities which they encountered. To them men behaved and spoke exactly as the sacred text describes. And hence, he will say, sprang not only the dramatic power of the best preaching from the Old Testament, but the greater part of its spiritual influence. Let us put aside in the meantime the cardinal facts of Israel's national history, whether what we call miraculous or not, for on these the greatest Christian preachers did not linger, and let us take the inimitable portraiture which the Old Testament contains. From the time of the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews onwards to the generation before our own, it has been among the personal characters of Israel's history that the greatest preachers in the English language have found much of their richest material and strongest inspiration. Men of such various schools as Sterne — for the author of *Tristram Shandy* was also among the prophets — Butler, Foster, Maurice, Kingsley, Newman, Robertson of Brighton, Candlish, Arnot, Spurgeon, and Beecher, have all used the Old Testament chiefly for its characters. Who does not remember how searching Butler is upon Balaam, and how impressive Newman is upon Saul! Some of Sterne's sermons, which he characteristically offers to his fashionable subscribers as a few reflections on the present state of society — and, by the way, Sterne's sermons are worth reading for their unconventional style and frequent fitness of phrase — are clever exposures of the weaknesses of that human nature which patriarchs, prophets and kings shared with ourselves. Robertson of Brighton, whose strong moral sense and power of analysis found full scope in the Old Testament, was busy with its dramas of character to trace the endlessness of sin and to illustrate how the Divine forgiveness does not necessarily remove the earthly consequences of human crime. So with a host of other men. It was, I say, not the miracles of Old Testament history nor the national events, upon which the preaching of our fathers fed and grew strong, but the personal elements; the development of character, the moral struggles, checks, catastrophes and recoveries, in which so many Books of the Old Testament are so very rich.

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[1] See below, p. 89, and in Lecture VIII. on Job.

'But we,' the modern preacher may say; 'how are we to imitate our predecessors? The strong, confident preaching you describe was all achieved before the influence of modern criticism had reached the pulpit. With perhaps some slight exceptions in the case of Maurice, who felt the issues raised by Colenso but was not greatly affected by them, none of the preachers you have named can be examples to us in the altered conditions of Old Testament study. We know that doubt has been cast by criticism upon large portions of the history to which these moral dramas have been assigned by the Old Testament records. We have heard that some of the stories are as legendary as those of Prometheus and Hercules, and that many of the characters portrayed are but the personifications of the genius and temper of the tribes of which they are represented as the ancestors.' It is not too much to say that such considerations have led to a kind of panic among preachers; and that some have abandoned incontinently whole provinces of their subject, in which in days gone by the Christian pulpit found many of its noblest themes and strongest motives.

In this somewhat disorderly retreat from the great sources of our art, the first thing to rally our minds is to remember how small a portion, after all, of the Old Testament has been affected. I shall be careful in the following estimate to go not merely to the limit of my own opinion of what actual history has been left to us, but as far as the majority of advanced critics have ventured within the last ten years; because it is needful that the possible worst should be clearly defined. Even then the amount of the history and narrative, which criticism has rendered uncertain, is by no means so great as is usually feared.

Let us leave the Pentateuch till afterwards, and begin now from the settlement in Canaan. There are few critics who doubt the authenticity of Deborah's song, and none who refuse to take it as a reliable account of the events which it celebrates. So will the main facts of Gideon's career, for the account of which more than one story has been used;[1] the story of Abimelech;[2] the occupation of Laish by Dan,[3] and part of the tragedy in Benjamin.[4] Except some eccentric and unfollowed critics, no one doubts that with the time of Samuel we at last enter real and indubitable history. This very great man's influence on Israel; his genius in swaying the new prophetic movement, so strange to the sober traditions of his own office, in selecting Saul and in launching the large but sluggish powers of the son of Kish upon so powerful a movement, are not only facts, but facts of obvious value to the preacher. It is quite true (as I said in last Lecture) that the

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[1] Judg. vi–ix.

[2] Judg. ix.

[3] Judg. xviii.

[4] Judg. xix–xxi.

Books of Samuel and Kings are composed of narratives of very various worth. Some are plainly of an age long subsequent to the events they describe; there has been time for later conceptions to mingle with the facts on which they are based. But others are contemporary, or nearly contemporary, documents, and in selecting these, as any modern translation or commentary will enable him to do,[1] and in employing them, the preacher may be as sure that he is dealing with facts as his predecessors of a less critical age. Nay more, he will find that criticism has brought him a certain amount of relief from difficulties which embarrassed his fathers in their study and presentation of the sacred history. That relief is of two kinds, both of which I may illustrate from the story of David.

We who have reached middle life can remember what time and anxiety the pastors of our boyhood used to expend upon the double and sometimes contradictory stories of David's life; for instance, the two very different accounts of his first introduction to Saul. Their attempts to reconcile these involved — even when one thought that they succeeded — so much intricate explanation as to distract them from the clear presentation of the moral issues, which it was their first duty as preachers to present and enforce to their people. But they did not succeed. The stories are irreconcileable. What an advantage, then, has the preacher of to-day who can frankly say: 'These are two different traditions of the same event,' and confine himself to the rich material and moral issues of the one or the other!

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[1] Like Kautzsch's German translation, for instance, or those in English, edited by Haupt in the *Sacred Books of the Old Testament;* or the volumes of the *International Critical Commentary*, by Professor H. P. Smith on Samuel, and by Professor Francis Brown on Kings (the latter not yet published).

Or take an instance where the relief afforded by criticism to the preacher is of a moral rather than of an intellectual kind. The character of David was one of the most complex ever possessed by man. His temper was not only ambitious and cruel. It was disfigured by some of the most ferocious traits which are characteristic of his race; for ferocity the Semites have always been notorious. But in the large heart of David there also stirred emotions of an opposite quality: the feeling for greatness in others, even when they hunted him as did Saul, whom he spared, and on whom, though Saul had been his persecutor and implacable foe, he wrote the greatest of all elegies;[1] his generosity and quickness to forgive, as in Saul's case and Shimei's; his noble penitence when his sin was brought home to him; the carriage of his soul in the days of disaster; his chivalry towards the captains who brought him water from the well of Bethlehem at the risk of their lives. Criticism finds no objection to many of the priceless narratives which have rendered such virtues immortal. Moreover, it has cleared the old age of David from a blot by which, if you adhere, with tradition, to the truth of every part of his biography, all these victories of his character are robbed of their splendour.[1] You remember the second chapter of First Kings, and David's charge to Solomon, when the days drew nigh that he should die: how he, a dying man, commanded his son not to let the hoar head of Joab, his lifelong comrade and lieutenant, go down to the grave in peace; and, in spite of the oath by which he had generously forgiven Shimei, to slay that spiteful and cowardly person. *Behold there is with thee Shimei son of Gera, the Benjamite of Bahurim, who cursed me with a grievous curse in the day when I went to Mahanaim; but he came down to meet me at Jordan and I sware to him by Jahweh, saying, I will not put thee to death with the sword. Now therefore hold him not guiltless, for thou art a wise man: and thou wilt know what thou oughtest to do with him — thou shalt bring his hoar head down to the grave with blood. And David slept with his fathers, and was buried in the city of David.*

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[1] See Lecture V. on 'The Spirit of Christ in the Old Testament.'

These are horrible words to be the last of such a life: horrible words clothing a horrible spirit. But this is just one of the passages in David's biography, which, upon linguistic and other grounds, criticism has taught us to doubt. It is a late passage; it betrays the temper as well as the dialect of a legal school in Israel, which enforced the extermination of the enemies of the pious.[1] We have much reason, therefore, to let it go, and letting it go we remove, from the most interesting of Old Testament stories of character, a termination which saddens every charm and blights every promise revealed by its previous progress.

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[1] 1 Kings ii. esp. 2–9: cf. Cheyne, *Aids to Devout Study of Criticism*, 63 ff.

These instances must suffice for the reigns of Saul, David and Solomon, as recounted in the Books of Samuel and Kings.[2] I have already shown that criticism accepts the official annals of their successors, but that personal narratives have mingled with these, and that the religious judgement passed on each reign has been entered by an editor writing from the later standpoint of Deuteronomy.[3] Among the personal narratives which thus mingle with the official annals, the greatest are those of Elijah and Elisha.

The story of Elijah (1 Kings xvii.–xix., xxi., and 2 Kings i., ii.), cannot be much later than a century after Elijah himself.[1] If some of the colossal elements of this prophet's fame be of posthumous growth, they not only prove how immense the man and his work must have been, but they reveal one of its chief qualities and they do not disguise the rest. The God of Elijah appears in overwhelming physical manifestations — as the Lord of drought and famine, of the cloud, the rain and the fire. He calls his prophet from the solitudes of nature and His hand makes His servant run and leap before the King's chariot across the whole length of Esdraelon. Such elements in the prophet's sympathy are conspicuous in other Semitic religions and are those on which the popular imagination would most naturally fasten. But they do not submerge other and higher religious interests. Elijah's jealousy for his God is not accounted for by explaining the contest of his time as one between the nearly equal religions of two Semitic tribes. Elijah's zeal is inexplicable unless it was inspired by a conviction of the unique character of Jahweh; his intolerance of foreign deities must have had ethical reasons. Such a conclusion is not only in line with the general development of Israel's religion[1] and supported by all we know of the rival Semitic faiths, but sustained by the story itself. According to this, Elijah enforced the claims of Jahweh in independence of the nation; not only against the deities of Phœnicia but against Ahab and Israel themselves. He predicted the employment of a foreign nation by Jahweh to punish His own people. Finally, he defended the rights of the common man against the avarice of the king. The religious interest of the narrative is of supreme significance. It is the emphasis, by one who felt all the physical wonder and force of the deity, of the indispensable ethical in religion. The former was common to all the Semitic religions; the latter was the character of Israel's God alone. No one therefore can doubt the historical reality of Elijah or the quality of that service which stamped him as the greatest prophet since Moses. Elijah was great enough to combine the physical and ethical significance of the Godhead. But he is represented as arriving only gradually at the full meaning of his message, and learning, through doubt and pain, that the ethical is the greater.[2] From this, too, we may infer the essentially historical value of his story: it is further supported by the saying attributed to him, *How long will*

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[1] Verses 2–4 are plainly, from their language, by a Deuteronomic Redactor, therefore later than the seventh century. The king, as pictured in verses 5–9, is quite incompatible with the picture of him given in the previous chapter; and the author of the rest of the chapter, verses 13–46, could not have known of verses 5–9, for he gives other grounds for the slaughter of Joab.

[2] The late and less trustworthy accounts in Chronicles have already been treated. See Lecture II., pp. 55 f.

[3] See pp. 65 f.

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[1] For the Northern Kingdom from which it sprang — (notice especially how Elijah goes to seek Jahweh not where the Judæan Amos hears his voice in Jerusalem, but at Horeb)—came to an end in 721, and was in dire trouble by 735. Elijah flourished *c.* 860.

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[1] See next Lecture.

[2] Chap. xix.

*ye limp between two opinions*, and his sarcasms upon the Phœnician myths of Baal.[1] We would be foolish, indeed, to doubt the originality of these. For the rest, there is not a single feature in the story which can be identified as late, or which does not reflect, in some way, the religious conditions of Elijah's time.

No school of criticism denies the reality of Elisha, or of his services to Israel in the disastrous days of the border wars with the Arameans and their raids up to the very walls of the capital. It was his ceaseless vigilance upon the enemy, his unbroken hope for his people through their worst defeats, which won for the aged prophet from his king the high name of the *Chariot of Israel and the Horsemen thereof*.[2] But it would be equally impossible to prove the historical reality of the series of curious marvels attributed to Elisha from sources outside the annals of the Kings of Israel. These, however, are practically of no importance to the Christian preacher.

Such instances must suffice for the period of Israel's history from Samuel to the eve of the great prophets of the eighth century. From this onwards, the student of Scripture traverses ground still more certain. The exceptions are trifling so long as we keep to the Books of Kings and the Prophets. Consider how all else lies before us unquestioned by criticism. Unquestioned? I should rather say fortified, explored, illuminated, made habitable for modern men. The labours of the prophets, the doom and fall of Northern Israel, the carriage of Jerusalem through her awful crisis upon the solitary faith of Isaiah; his victory; the reaction under Manasseh, and the recrudescence of heathenism; the discovery of Deuteronomy and the reforms of Josiah;[1] the confidence of the people in an external righteousness and their disillusionment by Josiah's tragic death at Megiddo; the second reaction to heathenism under Jehoiakim; the story of Judah's decline and fall; the story of the Exile and of the Return;[2] the brilliant hopes and their disappointment; the struggle, with foreign tyrants and native traitors, for the nation's purity and loyalty to God; the growth of legalism and of the sweet personal piety which grew behind the Law like a garden of lilies within a hedge of thorns; the story of the Diaspora and of contact with alien systems of culture and religion; the story of righteous suffering in meditation upon its meaning; the rise of speculation and of the schools of teachers, who applied the fear of Jahweh and the wisdom which springs from it to the everyday life of men. No historical criticism can take away these fields from the preacher of to-day. Across them he may move with all the confidence and boldness of the fathers — nay, with more freshness, more insight, more agility, for the text is clearer, the discrepancies explained, the allusions better understood, and all the old life re-quickened out of which those prophets and reformers, those psalmists and wise men, with all their literature, originally sprang.

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[1] xviii. 27.

[2] 2 Kings xiii. 14. Some critics have suggested that the name is a mere imitation of that already bestowed upon Elijah; but Elisha's services were such that more probably it was original in his case.

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[1] On the exact amount of these consult a good commentary on Kings.

[2] On the exact nature of this and the questions which still divide critics, see *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, vol. ii. chap. xvi.

Before we go back to the Hexateuch there are two questions about the historical character of portions of the literature which we have been surveying that demand some special notice — the authorship of the Psalms and the character of the Book of Jonah.

On the former of these this is not the place to go into details. But I may say summarily, that while it is impossible to conceive of so mobile and vibrant a heart as David's, so bold and musical a skill, as never stirred to the praise of his nation's God in an age when the secular and the religious were one; and while the King's fame as the father of sacred minstrelsy appears inexplicable unless he actually composed some hymns; yet recent criticism has tended to confirm the impossibility of proving any given psalm in our Psalter to have been by David.[1] 'The Psalter is the hymn-book of the second Temple' at least five hundred years after David passed away. No reliance can be placed upon the titles which its editors have prefixed to individual psalms.[2] And although it is possible, and I think on the whole certain, that the Psalter contains pre-Exilic elements — for it is hardly conceivable that lyrical expressions of the teaching of the great prophets were not preserved in Israel — yet, like all other religious poetry, that of Israel suffered such changes in its tradition and in its adaptation to use in public worship, that we cannot with any certainty trace its various constituents to their personal origins.

But if such conclusions be inevitable, does the religious value of the Psalter suffer from them? I venture, from practical experience, to think that it does not. The criticism of the Psalms may rob the preacher of the right to use many of the incidents and personal experiences which have lent picturesqueness to his preaching. But, after all, much of this is the mere confectionery of the pulpit, fit only to spoil the appetite of the hearers for the sincere milk of the word. No denial of Psalms to David or to Moses can diminish their spiritual value as authentic expressions of the human spirit on every level and under every shadow of the Church's experience. The detachment of the Psalms from this or that famous figure in Israel's history will only leave us the more free to appreciate their essential and unmitigated humanity, under the influence of God's Spirit. This is true even of such a Psalm as the Fifty-first. There is every reason to believe the Psalm to be Exilic.[1] Further, it is not the acknowledgment by a single individual of an extraordinary and revolting crime against some fellow-creature, but the confession, on behalf of the whole Church, of her inherent sinfulness before God, and of her neglect of her mission to the world.[2] I do not ask you to accept this view of the authorship and meaning of the Psalm. I only desire you to perceive that it does not lessen the religious value of the Psalm to the preacher or to his people.

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[1] See Robertson Smith, *Old Testament in the Jewish Church*,$^2$ vii.

[2] Some of them, like that of the 52nd, are so plainly unsuitable to the verses below them as to throw discredit on the rest; and as a matter of fact we know, from the titles given to the concluding Psalms in the Greek version but not found in the Hebrew, that the manufacture of titles was a process always going on, even after the Hebrew Canon closed, and based on pure conjecture. For a discussion of the whole subject see Robertson Smith, *op. cit.;* Cheyne, *The Origin of the Psalter*; Driver's *Introduction*,$^6$ chap. vii.; and on the other side Robertson's *Poetry and Religion of the Psalms:* Edinburgh, 1898.

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[1] The last two verses plainly fix the composition of the Psalm in the days before sacrifices had been resumed on the Temple altar and the walls of Jerusalem were still unbuilt. For the proof that these verses are from the same author as those which precede them see Cheyne, *Origin of the Psalter;* Robertson Smith, *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*, pp. 440 ff.; and compare *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, pp. 276 ff.

[2] Verse 4, '*Against Thee, Thee only have I sinned and done this evil in Thy sight*,' could hardly be said by David of his crime against his fellow-man and woman (cf. also verse 3). It is suitable to the lips of the Exilic Church, who were suffering in Babylon

The Book of Jonah raises a larger question than those of its own interpretation, but this is answered for us by Christ Himself. I said above that Revelation is not coincident with actual history. Christ has shown this by His parables; and the only view of the story of Jonah, which does justice to its teaching and explains its place in a Book of prophetic discourses, is that which treats it not as real history but as a sermon, in the form of a parable, upon the great evangelical truth, that *God has granted to the Gentiles also repentance unto life.* This I have elsewhere sufficiently proved and illustrated.[1]

There still remains the most difficult part of our present task — the Hexateuch. We all know that, from the time of the Epistle to the Hebrews to the present day, the strong preaching from the Old Testament, of which I have spoken, has understood the narratives of the Pentateuch as actual history. How has criticism affected our materials here?

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not because of their sins against that Empire, but because of their sins against God. For the use of verse 5 by the Church, and not by an individual, cf. Isaiah lxiii. 16 and John viii. 33 ff. For the meaning of bloodguiltiness in verse 14*a* see its contrast in 13, 14*b* and 15, the Church's duty of declaring God to sinners; and cf. Ezekiel iii. 18 ff.

[1] *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, vol. ii., chaps. xxxiv.–xxxviii.

I propose to take the Book of Genesis, and to examine first the part which opens with the Creation and Fall of Man in the second chapter and closes in the eleventh just before the call of Abraham.

Here it is obvious that we do not have a transcript of actual history, in the narrower sense of that word. This need scarcely be argued, but we may take two points in illustration of it. The Book of Genesis, by a careful chronology, carries the human family back by named generations to the creation of the first man, in 4219 B.C., or — according to the Greek version which makes the ages of the Patriarchs much greater at the birth of their sons than the Hebrew does — to 5408. But recent discoveries, in Babylonia and Egypt — the first of which we owe to American and the second to British labours — prove that in both of these great river-valleys man lived and had already developed considerable culture at a date long anterior to that assigned to his creation by the Book of Genesis.[1] Again, the Book of

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[1] The antiquity of human civilisation may not be so great as some Assyriologists calculate, but on the very lowest reckoning it preceded both of the Biblical dates for the Creation. An inscription of the Babylonian King Nabonidus, *c.* 550 B.C., states that he restored the temple of Narâm-Sin, built 3200 years previously, which would fix the date of Narâm-Sin at 3750 B.C., and this is generally accepted by Assyriologists, who have not only found inscriptions of Sargon I., father of Narâm-Sin, but inscriptions of his predecessors who, from the more primitive character of their writings, must have reigned about 500 years earlier, or say 4200, and who had even then reached a stage of civilisation requiring many

Genesis fixes the building of the Tower of Babel in 2564 B.C., or, if we take the Greek data, in 3166, and asserts that till then the *whole earth was of one language and of one speech.* Yet we have discovered inscriptions in three languages, of different families, Sumerian, Babylonian and Egyptian, which are all earlier than either of these dates.[1] Clearly then, on this ground of chronology alone, we cannot regard the early chapters of Genesis as actual history.

In support of this conclusion, archæology provides us with further evidence. In Babylonian literature there are traditions of the origin of man, of Paradise and of the Flood, which bear, even in their details, a remarkable resemblance to the account of the same subjects in Genesis i.–ix. Critics are now generally agreed that the traditions reached Israel at an early age, and that,

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previous centuries for its development. The '3200 years,' however, of Nabonidus' inscription is a suspiciously 'round' number. It is a multiple of forty, a usual Semitic reckoning for a generation; eighty forties. If we take it as eighty generations and adopt the juster calculation of thirty-three years for a generation, this would give us instead of 3200 years only 2640; which would fix Narâm-Sin's date, instead of at 3750, at 3190 B.C. Now, no Babylonian sovereigns have yet been discovered between 2900 and the relics of Narâm-Sin. The later date for him is therefore not improbable. But even if we accept it, the beginnings of civilisation in Mesopotamia can hardly be placed after either of the Biblical dates of the Creation. — The inscription of Nabonidus is in the British Museum, No. 91, 109; see *Guide to the Bab. and Assyr. Room*, pp. 171 f. and Pl. xxx. Further see *The Babyl. Expedition of the Univ. of Pennsylvania* (1893, etc.), ed. by Hilprecht.

[1] See more fully Driver, *Authority* etc., p. 34.

along with other elements of Babylonian legend and mythology, they underwent considerable modification and gradually became, when perhaps all memory of their true origin was lost, part of the folk-lore of Canaan. The process probably extended through many centuries before the authors of these chapters of Genesis used them for a higher purpose. But this absence of history from the chapters, this fact that their framework is woven from the raw material of myth and legend, cannot discredit the profound moral and religious truths with which they are charged, any more than the cosmogony of his time, which Milton employs, impairs by one whit our spiritual indebtedness to *Paradise Lost*.

Nor (it is hardly necessary to add) does the legendary character of these stories altogether destroy their historical value. Anthropologists are of opinion that many of the legends and superstitions of a people spring from recollections of tribes who preceded them in the occupation of the land, and who either disappeared in some great catastrophe, or, before dying out, struggled for a time furtively and mysteriously in wilder parts of their ancient domain. Such recollections of early races appear to underlie the genealogies and primitive civilisations described in the first eleven chapters of Genesis; and they are still more apparent in the rest of the Hexateuch: in Israel's traditions of the aboriginal tribes of Canaan and of the earliest adventures of the families of Jacob.

Whatever may have been the historical and literary origins of the narratives in Genesis of primæval man, their ethical value to the preacher is beyond all question. Look at the grandness of the conception which dominates and employs them. The Epic of Humanity in which they are arranged begins with a vision of creation. It traces the Divine purpose from the making of man. It follows man from the dawn of the moral sense through the elementary conflict of passion with conscience, the growth of knowledge, the necessity of labour, the beginnings of crime, the rise of civilisation, the separation of the peoples, the emergence at last of a chosen people — chosen, be it observed, not for their own salvation or their own glory but, as the epic affirms, in order that in them all families of mankind may be blessed.

Nor is this great epic only thus colossal in conception. In insight it is equally profound. I need not speak of the absence of national narrowness from its account of the origin of the race. Man is treated as man; the great human experiences of temptation and guilt, of desire and labour and death, are brought before us with a simplicity which too often hides from us the depth and volume of their truth. Take the prose poem of the Fall of Man in Paradise. It is usual to call the morality of early Israel a purely tribal morality like that of all their Semitic kinsfolk. But the nation which produced this story almost certainly before 700 B.C., had already within it minds far advanced beyond the stage of a tribal morality.[1] The man who composed the third chapter of Genesis was not the simple scribe of some early traditions at which, in our superior wisdom, we can smile as at a story for children. He was the acute and faithful reader of his own heart, and, from whatever source you believe his inspiration to have been derived, you cannot gainsay the essential truthfulness of his account. He had grasped the relation of God to the individual, he was expert in the heart's experience of temptation: the mysterious connection between knowledge and the boldness to sin; the workings of conscience; the relation of guilt, if not to death, yet to the terror and curse of death. After all the centuries of man's acquaintance with himself, after all the analyses of philosophy and ethics, we have hardly reached deeper than this ancient examination of the mysteries and complications of the human heart.

But go a little further in this epic and you discover traces of a remarkable conception of history. Evil is followed out of the individual heart to its effects on the family, on the state and on civilisation. The Fall of the Man in the garden is not the only Fall in the Book of Genesis, and every one of the others is traced to a similar source: the increase of knowledge and of power unaccompanied by reverence; the opening of the eyes to the desirable things of life which gradually come within reach of us all as the apple came within the reach of Eve. We have this presented to us in the form of several laborious cycles of progress, each ending in a colossal catastrophe. One of them relates the increase of mankind in numbers, their progress in intellectual and national power, their stagnancy in hate and the desire for vengeance.[1] Another tells us how men multiplied, how the pride and beauty of the race wedded with the sons of God, and wickedness became so great that God resolved to destroy man from the face of the earth.[2] Another describes the rise of architecture. Men settle in Shinar, they build cities, their art and their power increase, but their pride and impiety also, till God comes down and confounds the colossal and irreverent ambition of their works.[3] All three stories contain much legendary material from several different sources. Their authors have also been unable to throw off that fear of God, which is cast out only by the perfect love taught by Christ, and under which Pagan races have ever imagined the Deity to be jealous of the intellectual and material achievements of His creatures. Yet in all the greater relief that they lie beneath so sombre a heaven, the noble and permanent lessons of the inspired author stand forth: that human genius and human wealth, if not accompanied by faith and obedience to God, mean the development of a fatal pride, whose end is the destruction of many individuals and the retardation of all human progress. Has this no inspiration for the modern preacher? Does it not present a truth conspicuously absent from some theories of evolution which inspire so much of the hopefulness and the pride of modern man? — the truth, namely, that no evolution is stable which neglects the moral factor, or seeks to shake itself free from the eternal duties of obedience and of faith. Take the story which ends in the Song of Lamech in the fourth chapter. Cain has gone forth from the presence of God to the Land of Nod. From this first emigrant spring the civilisations. His eldest son founds a city. A later descendant, Lamech, has two wives, Adah and Zillah, names which probably mean *Light* and *Shadow*, and from them are born Jabal, the father of all who dwell in tents; Jubal, the father of such as handle harp and pipe; and Tubal-Qain, the wielder or forger of all instruments of copper and iron. And these three, the father of the Pastoral Life, the Maker of Music, and the Forger of Weapons, have a sister Na'amah, *gracious* or *beautiful*, whom later Jewish legend calls the mother of singing.

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[1] See below, next Lecture, pp. 133 ff.

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[1] Gen. iv. [2] Gen. vi. ff. [3] Gen. xi.

Now, how does the Song of Lamech greet all this progress of the equipment and adorning of human life? With an outburst of praise to God, the giver? With some apostrophe to man's power and skill? With thankful notes for the peace of the pastoral life defended by weapons from its foes? With none of these; but with a savage exultation in the fresh power of vengeance which all the novel instruments have placed in their inventors' hands.

*Then said Lamech to his wives Adah and Zillah,*
*Hearken to my voice,*
*Give ear to my saying:*
*I have slain a man for the hurt done me,*
*And a young man for the wound of me.*
*If seven times Qain be avenged,*
*Lamech shall be seventy times seven.*

How weird is this: how terrible! The first results of civilisation are to equip hatred and render revenge more deadly. And all the more weird is the little fragment, that out of those far-off days it seems to mock us with some grotesque reflection of our own time. Civilisation finding its apotheosis in enormous armaments; wealth and prosperity leading people to an arrogant clamour for war.[1]

These instances, from that part of the Old

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[1] On Gen. i.–xi., see Ryle, *Early Narratives of Genesis;* Marcus Dods, *Genesis* (*Expos. Bible*); Budde, *Urgeschichte.* Against the above view of Lamech's song, see Cheyne, 'Cainites,' *Encyc. Bibl.*

Testament in which we can be least sure that we are treading historical ground, are surely enough to show you how independent of historical certainty (in the narrower sense of the term) are the materials and inspiration which the preacher may draw for his own times from the ancient Scriptures of his Church.

Let us take the rest of Genesis in illustration of the same truth. With the close of the eleventh chapter we pass from humanity in general to the call of one family and the career of its individual heroes, whose characters have been so largely the source of the confident preaching I have described. After the criticism of the past century, how does it stand with the historical quality of the narratives from Abraham to Joseph? And if that quality be impaired, what is their value for the preacher?

As we saw in last Lecture, the documents in which the narratives are presented to us are of various dates, from the ninth or eighth to the sixth or fifth centuries before Christ. The earliest of them, the Jahwist and Elohist, to which the bulk of the narratives belong, may be approximately assigned to the eighth century, and of the same age are the earliest prophetic references to the Patriarchs;[1] they agree with, and are probably drawn from, the Jahwist-Elohist. But this means that the literature upon which we are dependent for our knowledge of the history of the Hebrews from Abraham to Joseph, is of a date from nine to eleven hundred years later than the personages and events which it describes.

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[1] Hosea's to Jacob, xii. 3-5 (Heb. 2-4), 12, 13 (Heb. 11, 12). Cf. the references by Amos to the conquest of Palestine and dispossession of the Amorite by Israel on their coming forth from Egypt (ii. 9, ix. 7, and by Hosea ii. 15 and xi. 1).

Nor can archæology furnish us with contemporary evidence of the Patriarchs and their careers. Archæology has indeed restored much of the life to which they belonged. It has shown us that in the time of Abraham, whom the documents assert to have come out of Mesopotamia into Palestine, there was constant traffic between these countries. The city, to which the early home of his family is assigned, has been identified and explored. *Ur of the Chaldees* lies on the borders of Arabia and Babylonia.[1] The settlement there of a nomadic Arabian tribe, such as the earliest records of Israel prove them to have been in genius and temperament; their contact for a time with civilisation; their half-weaning from the desert, and subsequent migration northwards along the Euphrates to

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[1] Ur is the modern Muḳayyar on the S. bank of the Euphrates, nearly 90 miles (as the crow flies) from the present junction of that river with the Tigris. Harran lay about 550 miles to the NW. of Ur, about 80 miles N. of the Euphrates at Tiphsah or Thapsacus, the ancient 'passage' towards Canaan; and between the Euphrates and the Habur (mod. Khabur), probably the 'two rivers' of the name Aram-Naharaim, given by Gen. xxiv. 10 as the region in which Harran lay.

Harran and then south into Canaan, are all illustrated not only by archæology but by the drift of Arabian tribes upon Mesopotamia and Syria within historical times. These last also make possible the wanderings of such a half-settled family as Abraham's upon the desert borders of Southern Palestine and Egypt. The four Mesopotamian kings, of whose invasion of Canaan and pursuit by Abraham we are told in Genesis xiv., 'were really contemporaries; and at least three of them ruled over the countries which they are said in Genesis xiv. to have ruled'; and their invasion of Palestine was 'in the abstract, within the military possibilities of the age.'[1] The existence of the names Jacob and Joseph has been discovered in Palestine at an earlier age than the Exodus;[2] the name 'Israel,' as of a people, in touch with Egypt, has been deciphered upon a stelé of the Pharaoh under whom the Exodus probably took place.[3] And not only does the story of Joseph reflect the social customs, the economic processes, and the official etiquette of the kingdom of the Pharaohs;[4] but the settlement of a semi-nomad tribe in Goshen,[5] at first in favour with the court of

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[1] Driver, *Authority and Archæology*, p. 44.

[2] In the lists of cities conquered in Palestine by Thothmes III. of the fifteenth century, cf. W. M. Müller, *Asien u. Europa*, 162 ff.

[3] Merenptah; cf. Steindorff, *ZATW*, xvi. 330 f.

[4] See above, pp. 62 ff.

[5] This name is apparently identical with Kesem, the twentieth

Egypt and then, on the succession of another dynasty, oppressed and enslaved, has also been proved to be perfectly possible in the history of Egypt between the eighteenth and fourteenth centuries.

But, just as we have seen, that in all this archæological evidence there is nothing to prove the early date of the documents which contain the stories of the Patriarchs, but on the contrary even a little which strengthens the critical theory of their late date,[1] so now we must admit that while archæology has richly illustrated the possibility of the main outlines of the Book of Genesis from Abraham to Joseph, it has not one whit of proof to offer for the personal existence or characters of the Patriarchs themselves. Where formerly the figures of the 'Father of the Faithful' and his caravans moved solemnly in high outline through an almost empty world, we see (by the aid of the monuments) embassies, armies and long lines of traders crossing, by paths still used, the narrow bridge which Palestine forms between the two great centres of early civilisation; the constant drift of desert tribes upon the fertile land, and within the latter the frequent villages and their busy fields, the mountain-keeps with their Egyptian garrisons, and the cities on their mounds walled with broad bulwarks of brick and stone. But amidst all that crowded life we

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nome of Lower Egypt. But see Griffith's 'Goshen,' Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*.

[1] See above, pp. 62 ff.

peer in vain for any trace of the fathers of the Hebrews; we listen in vain for any mention of their names. This is the whole change archæology has wrought: it has given us a background and an atmosphere for the stories of Genesis; it is unable to recall or to certify their heroes.

With, therefore, nothing more from archæology than the sense of the possibility of the main events of these stories, we return to the stories themselves; and here we meet with not a little that confirms the scepticism engendered by their late date. We perceive, *first*, that many of the personal names are names of tribes as well; *second*, that the characters described in the individuals are the characters developed in history by the corresponding tribes; and *third*, that the transactions between individuals, who bear tribal names, may often be most naturally explained as transactions between tribes. It is hardly necessary to give instances of the first of these facts: the recollection of the sons of Noah, of Abraham, of Isaac and of Jacob is enough. But take a few illustrations of the second and third. The characters of Ishmael, of Jacob and of Esau were the characters of the historical tribes Ishmael, Israel and Edom. Jacob is the essential Israel; in economy, shepherds settling down to agriculture; in religion, worshippers of Jahweh by descent and covenant, meeting Him at certain famous shrines, but carrying about with them domestic gods, as we see even in the family of David; in temperament and genius, astute, persistent, unbroken by disappointment or hope deferred, capable of excelling their neighbours in the Semitic craft and fraud, but capable too of vision and of struggling with the Unseen. Esau, on the other hand, is the essential Edomite, as we see him in Scripture, as we realise him on his proudly isolated territory, as we touch him to the last in Antipater and the Herods[1] — a hunter, *a man of the field* or wild uncultivated lands, a man with gods but no religiousness;[2] *profane*, impulsive, careless, easily wearied. Similarly, Ishmael with *his hand against every man*, Moab with his drunken and incestuous origin, and Reuben with his unchastity, are reflections of the qualities which the tribes called by the same names appear to have developed in history. Or take the transactions imputed to individuals with tribal names. When Jacob marries the daughters of the Aramean Laban, and after a long and cruel struggle, which proves that son and father-in-law cannot share the same lands, fixes a boundary with Laban that neither shall pass, 'they plainly represent two peoples'[3] at one time related, as philology and ethnology alike prove the Bible to be right in stating, but later in history divided—and this on the very line on which Jacob and Laban are said to have set up their landmark. Similarly, when Judah is represented as *going down from his brethren*[1] to Adullam and begetting children by a Canaanite woman, we are not compelled to read that as the story of a scandalous adventure by the son of Jacob. We may much more naturally interpret the tale as an account of the irregular marriages which members of the tribe of Judah, situated within historical times on the Central Range of Palestine, contracted with the Canaanites on the Shephelah below them.

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[1] See *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, vol. ii. chap. xiv.

[2] Cf. the curious absence of any influence from the Edomite religion on Israel in the midst of constant influences from the religions of all the other neighbours of Israel.

[3] Driver, Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*, ii. 535*a*.

The numerous facts, of which these are sufficient instances, prove that we have in the stories of the Hebrew Patriarchs just what their late date would lead us to expect: efforts to account for the geographical distribution of neighbouring nations, for their affinities, contrasts, and mutual antipathies, and in particular for the composite character of Israel. Perhaps such efforts become most transparent in the derivations offered for geographical names, and the origins claimed for customs and institutions extant in the writers' own day. Finally, this view is confirmed by the undoubtedly late features which can be recognised in the stories, and by the different accounts of the same subject in the different documents according to the characteristic spirit of each. The Blessing of his sons attributed to Jacob in Genesis xlix. not only describes the geographical disposition of the Twelve Tribes after their settlement in Palestine; but, in verses 22–26, reflects the experiences of Northern Israel during the Aramean wars of the ninth century; another edition of the same Blessing is attributed to Moses in Deuteronomy xxxiii. In the Jahwist, or Judæan Document, Judah is the chief of his brethren; but in the Elohist, Reuben.[1] On the whole, the religious atmosphere of the Jahwist and Elohist stories throughout Genesis is that of the early kingdom of Israel.[2] The Patriarchs sacrifice in many places, like Elijah and Elisha, but chiefly at the shrines to which in the eighth century, as Amos and Hosea tell us, the Israelites resorted: Beer-sheba, Bethel, Gilgal by Shechem — *the terebinth of Moreh* — and Mizpeh of Gilead. In the eighth century there was yet no Deuteronomic veto on sacrifice at places other than the *one*, where Jahweh should set His name. The Priestly Writers, on the other hand, with their strict views of the confinement of ritual to the central sanctuary, never make any allusion to the licence of sacrifice which the Jahwist and Elohist impute to the Patriarchs, and do not localise the appearances of the Deity to Abraham or to Jacob at any of the shrines famous in the eighth century.[1] Surely this clinches the proof that the stories of the Patriarchs have reached us, as told by later generations, who reflected upon them their own conditions, experiences and beliefs.

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[1] Genesis xxxviii.

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[1] For this and other differences in the combined narratives in Genesis xxxvii. see the analysis by Addis, *Documents of the Hexateuch*, i. 70 ff.

[2] See Robertson Smith's trenchant review of Renan's *History of Israel*, vol. i., in the *English Historical Review*, vol. iii. (1888), pp. 128 f.

It is extremely probable, however, though impossible of proof, that the stories of the Patriarchs, thus replete with the circumstances and conceptions of a later age, have at the heart of them historical elements. The oldest literary portions of the documents are songs and poems, some of which, although (as we have seen in the case of Genesis xlix.) they also bear late marks, may have grown round a contemporary kernel, while a few others may be altogether from the age to which they are assigned. A more significant symptom is the presence in the names, characters and deeds of the Patriarchs of much which cannot be interpreted racially, but which is distinctly individual. It is always possible, of course, to regard this as the addition of an age, in which the tribal meaning of the stories had been forgotten, and they were conceived as purely personal narratives. But it is equally just to take some of the individual elements to have existed in the tradition from the beginning, and to this we are further moved by two considerations: *first*, that it is impossible to attach any tribal quality to some of the names, like Abraham; and *second*, that a great religious advance such as Abraham is said to have made has always an individual character and experience as its starting-point. With critics there has been a distinct reaction of late in favour of admitting the personal reality of Abraham;[1] no one has ever doubted that of Moses; while Joshua's personality rests to-day on surer grounds than in the earlier stages of criticism.[2] With regard to the more difficult cases of Jacob and Joseph, the sane and expert arguments of Canon Driver in his articles in Hastings's *Bible Dictionary* will be felt to be conclusive by all who have not incontinently abandoned the task of tracing Israel's history behind the Exodus.

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[1] See the Priestly Document as separately set forth in Addis's *Documents of the Hexateuch*, vol. ii. pp. 207 ff.

Such is the case for the narratives of the Patriarchs. On the present evidence, it is impossible to be sure of more than that they contain a substratum of actual personal history. But who wants to be sure of more? Who needs to be sure of more? If there be a preacher who thinks that the priceless value of these narratives to his work depends on the belief that they are all literal history, let him hold that belief if he can, and confidently use them. Or if he cannot believe that Genesis is literal history, and yet thinks it must needs be, in order to be used as God's Word, let him seek his texts elsewhere: his field is wide and inexhaustible.

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[1] Cf. Cornill, *Geschichte des israelit. Prophetismus.*

[2] See article 'Joshua' by the present writer in Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*, ii. 786 f.

Than these extremes there is, however, a nobler way: and the honest student who is ready to accept the evidence and example of Scripture itself will surely find this. He will see that the sacred writers aimed at something higher than the bare reproduction of primitive history —in itself an impossible task; that, possessed by the experience of God and the human heart, which subsequent ages of the Divine education had delivered to them, they read all that into the traditions of the remote past; and so achieved the creation of types of character essentially historical, not only in this, that they portray with wonderful fidelity the tempers, aspirations and experiences of Israel and her neighbours, but because they discover human nature, as it is in every race of mankind, and clearly tell of the reality of God, as they themselves had been inspired by His Spirit to find Him. To the sacred authors of these stories we cannot refuse a licence of dramatic and ethical expansion which we, more consciously, permit in our own preaching, and which every powerful preacher of the traditional school has fearlessly employed. As preachers, we cannot refuse to follow the narratives of Genesis till we refuse to follow the parables of Jesus.[1] If criticism, with the help of archæology, has failed to establish the literal truth of these stories as personal biographies, it has on the other hand displayed their utter fidelity to the characters of the peoples they reflect, and to the facts of the world and the Divine guidance in which these peoples developed. The power of the Patriarchal narratives on the heart, the imagination, the faith of men can never die: it is immortal with truthfulness to the realities of human nature and of God's education of mankind.

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[1] See below, on Job, in Lecture VIII.

# LECTURE IV

## THE PROOF OF A DIVINE REVELATION IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

We have now reached the most important of the questions with which these Lectures have to deal. Does the criticism — whose historical results are estimated in last Lecture — leave to us unimpaired our belief in the Old Testament as the record of a Divine Revelation? It is true that, if this question had to be answered in the negative, there would still remain in the Hebrew Scriptures matter of extraordinary value to him who seeks to lead his fellow-men to the knowledge of God. Some contain parts of the argument which we call Natural Theology; others illustrate how belief in God is consonant with experience and indispensable to conduct; others test the former of these conclusions amid the apparently hostile facts of life: while all exemplify the truth that whatsoever religious beliefs be shaken, faith in God and His goodness are the invariable starting-point and inevitable return of the far-travelling hearts of men.[1] Yet precious as such human argument and experience by itself would be, it is all of less interest to us than the question whether Israel's knowledge of God was due to the authentic, personal action of God Himself. This is the testimony of the writers of the Old Testament, and it is confirmed by our Lord. Here, then, we touch the very crisis of our inquiry.

Before we examine what effect modern criticism has had on the answer to the question of Revelation, we must see whether we understand the statement of the question, or in other words what are the exact claims to Divine inspiration which the Old Testament makes for itself. These have been strangely misunderstood both by their assailants and by most of their defenders.

In the first place the Hebrew Scriptures — in contrast to the timidity of many of their apologists — emphasise the origin of human valour and justice, skill, art, and wisdom — all common virtue and common knowledge[1] — as by the inspiration of Almighty God. This is irrespective of the use of these qualities in the service of Israel. *The earth is Jahweh's and the fulness thereof; the spirit of man is the candle of Jahweh. By Him kings reign and princes decree justice. Have we not all one Father, hath not one God created us?* Of course men have imaginations and thoughts which are not God's thoughts. But courage, wisdom, justice, wherever found, are of His Spirit. Even upon civilisations alien to Israel and doomed to destruction, like those of Egypt and Phœnicia, Isaiah pours his regrets and his hopes,[2] as if their powers were divine and might yet serve the purpose of Jahweh. But the writers of the Old Testament give even more practical proof of this generous belief by their adoption from sources beyond Israel of cosmogonies, traditions, legends and even conceptions of Deity. In our present inquiry, therefore, we need not encumber ourselves with the question of the inspiration of other literatures than that of Israel. Whatsoever things are true, honest, just, pure, lovely and of good report, are of God. His providence, too, is universal. *Are ye not as the children of the Ethiopians unto me, O children of Israel? saith Jahweh. Have I not brought up Israel out of the land of Egypt and the Philistines from Kaphtor and the Syrians from Kir?*

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[1] 'As Scripture nowhere contemplates men as ignorant of the existence of God, it nowhere depicts the rise or dawn of the idea of His existence in men's minds. . . . The Hebrew came down from his thought of God upon the world, he did not rise from the world up to his thought of God. . . . His contemplation of nature and providence and the life of man was never of the nature of a search after God whom he did not know, but always of the nature of a recognition of God whom he knew. . . . The singer of Ps. xix. only saw repeated on the heavens what he already carried in his own heart.' . . . Isa. xl. 25 ff. ' teaches nothing new or unknown, it recalls what is known, reburnishing the consciousness of it, in order to sustain the faith and the hopes of the people. There is, however, in one or two passages an approximation to some of the arguments of Natural Theology,' *e.g.* Ps. xciv. 5 ff. — Dr. A. B. Davidson, article 'God' (in Old Testament), Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*, ii. 196.

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[1] See especially Isaiah xxviii. 6, 23–29, and Robertson Smith's remarks in *Old Test. and Jew. Church*², p. 340: 'According to Isaiah xxviii. 23 ff. the rules of good husbandry are a "judgement" taught to the ploughmen by Jehovah, and part of Jehovah's Torah (verse 26). The piety of Israel recognised every sound and wholesome ordinance of daily and social life as a direct gift of Jehovah's wisdom. Accordingly Jehovah's law contains, not only institutes of direct revelation in our limited sense of that word, but old consuetudinary usages, which had become sacred by being taken up into the God-given polity of Israel and worked into harmony with the very present reality of His redeeming sovereignty.'

[2] Isa. xix. and xxiii.

But, in the second place, the Hebrew writers claim for Israel a special choice and providence by God in order that He may make known to them, as He directly does to no other people of mankind, Himself: that is to say not in His metaphysical substance, for of this there is no definition in the Old Testament, but in His character and in His ethical purposes for all mankind. In contrast to some modern theories, which regard Revelation as the communication by supernatural means of many kinds of truth — which, as we have just seen, Israel did not hesitate to borrow from the traditions of other peoples — Revelation by the Hebrew writers is limited to the Revelation of God Himself: and that not of the fact of His existence, which the Old Testament takes for granted, but of His ethical character and will for men. This Revelation they represent as unique to Israel, and with equal emphasis assert that it has not been discovered by human efforts unaided, but that God Himself has 'taken the initiative,'[1] and made Himself known to Israel.

In the light of these two aspects of Old Testament doctrine of the Knowledge of God, our question as to its Revelation is not therefore primarily one as to its origins, but one as to its contents. Are these unique? Do we have in the Old Testament a true knowledge of the character and ethical purpose of God which we do not find original to any race except Israel? But then, secondly, is this knowledge all explicable as impressions of God received through the people's physical environment, or by their merely intellectual inferences from the facts of their history, or by their remarkable combination of the conceptions of God which they received from nations with whom they came into contact?[2] Or, while all these may have been used, does the evidence justify the claim of Israel that God in His Love and Holiness drew near to this people and impressed Himself personally upon them through the events of their history and through the consciousness of their great men?

I think it can be shown that criticism, so far from throwing doubts either upon the uniqueness of Israel's true knowledge of God, or upon the personal influence of God as producing this, certainly proves the former, and leaves us with the latter as its most natural and scientific explanation. Or to put this otherwise — the most advanced modern criticism provides grounds for the proof of a Divine Revelation in the Old Testament at least more firm than those on which the older apologetic used to rely.[1]

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[1] A. B. Davidson, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

[2] It is one of the great services of Budde's *Religion of Israel before the Exile* to show how much Israel benefited religiously during that period from her contact with other Semitic peoples. See especially p. 71 (but cf. below, p. 132 of this Lecture).

Modern research has achieved this service for us, first by changing the whole arena upon which the question of the uniqueness of Israel's religion has to be fought out. Fifty years ago the apologist for the Old Testament could determine the character of its religion only by comparison with those of the nations of classical antiquity. But there was always something unsatisfactory, something impossible, in this comparison. The Greeks and the Romans were Aryans, Israel was Semitic; there did not appear to be any ground common to them all from which you could start the contrast of their respective developments. The older apologetic for the Old Testament was, therefore, more or less unreal. But this has been changed by the researches of the past fifty years. The discovery of the monuments of Babylonia, Syria and Arabia, the study of the pre-Mohammedan literature of the Arabs, the observation of current life in the Arabian deserts, have disclosed to us the ritual, the institutions, the conceptions of God and the world, which prevailed in the race from which Israel sprang. We are able to contrast the religion of Israel with those of peoples who were of the same stock, who inhabited similar geographical conditions, who were modified by the same political forces, who exhibited the same genius and temperament, and who exercised strong religious influences upon Israel at various periods in her history.

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[1] It would be very easy to prove the compatibility of belief in Revelation in the Old Testament with the results of modern criticism by simply citing the personal dicta of some of the most eminent critics. There is an idea abroad among Christians that the whole critical school are hostile to belief in Revelation. For this some critics, who avoid the question of Revelation even when their discoveries lead them to the verge of it, are partly to blame; but it would be readily dispelled by the explicit confessions of such a belief by other critics, and these among the most able and advanced. Kuenen in his collected Essays approaches the question of Revelation in the Old Testament, yet never addresses himself to it. I stated this in a review of the German translation of the Essays (Kuenen's *Gesammelte Abhaendlungen*, 1894) in the *Expositor* (July–Dec. 1895), and the translator, Professor Budde, a pupil of Kuenen, and one of the most eminent of German critics, wrote me that the observation was right, but that as for himself his belief in 'a genuine revelation of God in the Old Testament remains rock-fast.' That belief has been shared and stated by a number of advanced critics. The late Professor Robertson Smith affirmed again and again his belief in the Divine Origin of the Old Testament, and in the last of his Burnett Lectures (unfortunately unpublished), proved 'the uniqueness of Hebrew prophecy and the impossibility of accounting for it by natural or historical reasons' (from an MS. report of the last Burnett Lecture). Cf. also *The Old Testament in the Jewish Church*², p. 297.

At first it appeared as if this recovery of the Semitic race as a whole were to result in the proof of a physical origin for the religion of Israel.

From their native deserts the race seem to have derived a capacity for detachment from the things of sense, and a capacity of vision. In what we may call the religious temperament, and in the qualities required for the propagation of religion: the powers of intuition, of introspection, of self-denial, of patience under hope deferred, of zeal even to the pitch of fanaticism, the Semite in history has been supreme. Under the fascination of the unfolding of the complete picture of the race, derived from so many periods and areas, it was asserted that the religion of Israel was simply the flower of the natural religiousness of the Semitic peoples.

Others went further. Besides deriving the religious temper of the Hebrew from his racial origin, they essayed to trace his religious creed to the same source. The hypothesis naturally started from the fact that the three great forms of monotheism, Judaism, Christianity and Islam, have all sprung from Semitic peoples. Does this prove, in the Semites, or in the history of the world they inhabited, a native tendency to such a form of faith? In saying that religion is a quality of the Semitic temper, are we able to narrow our terms and assert that monotheism was a necessary notion of the Semitic mind? You can see of what importance the question is at the point which we have reached. On the answer to it depends the answer to our question about a real revelation in the Old Testament. It requires, therefore, a detailed examination.

The thesis, that monotheism was native to the Semitic mind, has been chiefly maintained by Renan. More than forty years ago he asserted that 'monotheism summed up and explained all the characteristics of the race.' The origin of this he found in the desert, the birthplace and, to a large extent, the home of the Semites. 'Nature,' he says, 'plays a small part in the Semitic religion, because she plays a small part in the Semitic world.' 'The desert is monotheist: sublime in its immense uniformity it has revealed to man the idea of the infinite; but not the sense of that life incessantly creative which a more fertile nature has inspired in other races.' And from this 'austere, grandiose influence' he deduces, upon the lines of natural development, all the contents of Israel's monotheism.[1]

I do not propose to spend much time in proving to you, in contradiction of these statements, that all Semitic tribes were originally polytheists, for we have more important matters in hand than the proof of so certain a fact. Since Renan formed his confident opinions, a large number of monuments have been discovered, not only in Babylonia and Phœnicia (whose nations he always asserted to be exceptions to the Semitic rule), but in the territories of the Arameans, Moabites, Edomites, and even in Central Arabia, which bear witness that polytheism was the religion of every one of these tribes. Sinai and Mecca, from which two of the great monotheisms took their rise, were both of them desert sanctuaries, and both of them were pantheons. We do not see anything different when we shift our gaze from Mecca and Sinai to Jerusalem. Palestine repeats the religious record of Hauran, Moab and Arabia. As was to be expected where nature is lavish, agriculture the staple, and men drink wine; where the land is broken up into well-defined provinces, and cities multiply, and the political side of religion is developed with its differentiation of many deities — where, in fact, on the seaboard of the Mediterranean we find physical and political conditions similar to those of Greece — the polytheism of the Semite becomes luxurious and rank. Baalim abound everywhere: Baalim of the underground waters, and Baalim of the waters above; Baalim of the mountains and Baalim of the plains; Baalim of the sun and Baalim of the stars; Baalim of the cities and Baalim of the tribes. Every nation has its own god, and believes in the reality of the gods of its neighbours. Every power in nature is worshipped, till altars rise *on every high hill and under every*

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[1] See 'De la part des peuples Sémitiques' in the *Journal Asiatique*, 1859: *L'Histoire Générale des Langues Sémitiques*, 1863 (third edition), pp. 5 ff.; and the more modified statements in the *Histoire du Peuple d'Israël*, i. pp. 8 ff.

*green tree*, with a mythology which is not only almost as elaborate as the Greek, but many of the grossest forms of which the Semitic peoples of Canaan are justly supposed to have conveyed in early times to the Hellenic world.

Such was the race to whose natural tendencies and geographical environment Renan traced the origins of Israel's monotheism. They were polytheists, and nowhere did their polytheism become more rank than in the very province in which Israel's monotheism culminated.

Before, however, we can dismiss Renan's assertions, we have to ask whether Semitic polytheism contains anything which points either to a primitive monotheism or to an ultimate monotheism. Do we find in it any recollections of a habit of regarding the Deity apart from the various gods, or can we trace in the Semitic world, outside Israel, Christianity and Islam, any signs of a development towards monotheism?

Of the former of these the evidence is extremely meagre. Virtually it consists only in the possession by all Semitic peoples of a common word for God, *'el*, which proves that the Semites were able to form the abstract conception of Deity, but does not prove that outside Israel any of them had ever regarded a single deity as universally sovereign, or comprising in Himself the functions and attributes of the various local gods. On the other hand, Professor Robertson

Smith has shown how the basis of all Semitic faiths, as we find them in history, appears to be the physical kinship of gods and men. According to that notion each tribe of men was descended from a divine father, whose blood flowed in their veins, and who was lord and ruler of the tribe alone.[1] There are no clearer facts about Semitic religion than these two: that every tribe had its own god, and that between a tribe and its god there existed a congenital solidarity, so to speak, which could never be dissolved, nor have substituted for it a solidarity between the tribe and any other deity. This does not look like a religion which has descended from a primitive monotheism.

Turning to our second question — was there in the Semitic form of religion any tendency *towards* monotheism? We cannot deny that in the singular relation between each tribe and its deity there lay what we may call a great opportunity for monotheism. To have one God singled out for the tribe as supreme; to believe that no other was his equal within a certain territory and for a certain number of men — this surely gave room and time for a purer faith to develop. It meant a habit and direction of the mind which might be employed in the interests of unity. But in itself it was no more than this; and we can see that unless there were present in that space, from which the supremacy (if not the reality) of other gods was excluded, and at work upon that habit of worshipping one as the governor of life, some influence superior to limits of space and capable of employing that habit for a spiritual end, the opportunity would be lost and the habit rendered barren.

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[1] *Religion of the Semites*, p. 31.

Such an influence, not only capable of sustaining the habit of worshipping one god within the territory of the tribe, amid all temptations to divide his worship with that of others, but strong enough to extend this habit wherever the tribe travelled or the thoughts of the tribe travelled, might be one of three kinds — intellectual, political, or moral.

Of the intellectual forces which make for monotheism, the two most powerful are the ability, by comparing several gods, to form an abstract conception of the deity common to them all; and the conclusion from the observation of the course of nature, that this is a harmonious and consistent whole, derivable from a single cause. Both of these powers are found among the Semites; but, outside the influence of Israel, neither of them led to monotheism. Of the former we have a proof in the possession, already noticed, by all the Semites of a common name for God — *'el*. But *'el*, if ever used as a proper name, appears to have been regarded as that merely of one other god, in addition to the national and local deities. Again, some of the Semites developed a cosmogony, but outside the Old Testament this appears never to have been accompanied by, or to have led to, monotheism. Gods in the plural and of both sexes assisted at every stage of it.

Of more probable influence for monotheism than these intellectual tendencies were the political forces of the Semitic world. In the growth of a single tribe to power over its neighbours there lay the possibility of its deity being raised to a higher rank than all their deities. Did experiences of this kind never develop that opportunity to monotheism which we have found inherent in the characteristic form of Semitic religion? The answer is that minor conquests within the Semitic world, so far from always extending the conqueror's notion of the power of his god, constantly brought him under the temptation of adding to his worship of the latter the worship of the gods of the land which he had taken and occupied. An instance of this is found in the history of Israel, who, after the settlement of Canaan, frequently fell under the fascination of the local Baalim, with their supposed patronage of the fertility of the soil. No general conquest by one tribe of all the others took place before the great advance of the Assyrian Empire in the eighth century before Christ. This discredited, as we see from the prophecies of Isaiah, a number of the local and tribal deities in the Semitic world, who did not enable their worshippers to resist it. It helped to shatter, as Robertson Smith has pointed out, the tribal limits of religion, and so far was undeniably a new opportunity for the development of monotheism. Yet, in the long-run, the Assyrian conquests only substituted among the Semites a small number of new gods for the crowd of discredited deities; and by divorcing religion from the local interests and everyday life of the tribesmen and throwing it back into association with the forces of nature, those conquests did religion more harm than good.[1]

This brings us to the last of the possible forces which make for monotheism — the ethical. In the fragmentary condition of the monuments and traditions, upon which we depend for our knowledge of the pagan Semitic religions, it is difficult for us to appreciate the ethical contents of the latter. This, however, is certain. The fact that the gods were tribal brought religion into touch with the practical conduct of life, with the discharge of justice, and with public emergencies. But there the ethical virtue of it appears to have ceased. The duty of the god, the help he could afford, were identified with the selfish interests of the tribe. Not justice nor mercy was the supreme care of the deity, but the victory and prosperity of his people. On the one hand, there can have been no idea of humanity as a whole; on the other, little sense of the value of the individual in himself.[1] The awe and sanction of religion kept a man in his place as part of the tribal organism; but ethically it did not develop his individuality beyond his public duties of courage, and devotion to the interests of the tribe. The god, who (as several scholars have pointed out) was simply the glorified sheikh of the tribe, had a moral interest only in the fulfilment of the individual's social obligations and due performance of the ritual, but had no concern with his spiritual character. In short, it may be said, reversing the well-known words about Jahweh, that the Semitic god saw as man seeth; he looked not upon the heart. Wellhausen says of the heathen Arabs, even after some influences of Judaism and Christianity had come upon them, that religion did not work with any energy upon the thinking or doing of the individual. No doubt the individual was affected by the fear of God. But even in the days when, under foreign influence, the heathen Arabs had slightly anticipated Mohammed in the conception of one God, He affected them only in one way. The highest moral name they gave Him was El-Wāz‘, the Restrainer.[2] That is to say, the thought of God kept them from sin, but was powerless to inspire them to new ideals of virtue. For the rest, the Deity moved above the individual, an inscrutable yet easily irritated Fate: God that was force and not character.

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[1] See Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 35, 65.

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[1] This is very apparent from the early religion of Israel.

[2] Wellhausen, *Reste arabischen Heidentumes*, p. 191.

This has been a somewhat long survey, but your attention will not have been wasted if it has led you to understand that, while there existed in the fundamental form of Semitic religion and at various crises in Semitic history certain opportunities for the development of monotheism, and also some influences which make for monotheism, yet outside Israel those influences were not powerful enough to make use of the opportunities.

How, then, was it that monotheism appeared in Israel alone of all ancient Semitic nations? How was this member of the race alone able to take advantage of opportunities which all the others shared with her; and in a physical environment, very fertile in polytheism, not merely to rise above this to a stage of religion subordinate only to the Christianity of Christ, but to exhibit throughout her whole history a religious progress which Christ affirmed to be the gradual preparation for Himself?

To this unique exception in the history of Semitic religion it is my firm belief that only one cause can be assigned, and that is, that in the religion of Israel, as recorded in the Old Testament, there was an authentic revelation of the One True God: of which thesis the rest of this Lecture is offered as a proof on the lines of modern criticism. And as the proof is most difficult with regard to the earlier stages of Israel's history in which we see their religion not yet far removed from the ordinary Semitic levels, I propose to limit the inquiry to the period before the greatest prophets. If we can prove the possibility of revelation among the religious conditions which then existed, the pure monotheism of the prophets which followed, and the culmination of the whole process in Christ, will complete and vindicate our argument.

There is no necessity to prove in detail the Semitic origins of the Hebrews and their religion.[1] The traditions of the people affirm not only these but the close kinship of Israel to certain tribes of the race which still clung to the ancestral desert, or had not drifted beyond its borders: Ishmael, Ammon, Moab and Edom. Israel were at first a loose confederacy of clans descended from a common ancestor, and cursed with the incoherency of all Semitic society. They came out of the desert into Palestine, and through the formative period of their history not only were affected by the neighbourhood of the desert to their territory; but portions of them intermarried with desert tribes or continued in close alliance with these. Their fathers had been nomads; and the characters of their typical men, as for instance Jacob, are essentially, in their good and bad elements, the characters of the desert herdsmen.

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[1] I have given detailed proofs in the first of the Jowett Lectures on the Religion of Israel in the Eighth and Seventh Centuries, which I hope soon to publish.

It is in their religion, however, that their Semitic origin is most apparent. The god of early Israel was a tribal god; and His relation to His people is described in the same way as Israel's neighbours describe the relation of their gods to themselves. Israel looked to Jahweh as the Moabites looked to Chemosh, for leadership in war, for decisions upon justice — including the detection of criminals and lost property and the settlement of questions of inheritance — and for direction as to the ritual of worship. They prayed to him to let them see their desire on their enemies, ascribed their victories to His love for them, their defeats to His anger, and they devoted to Him in slaughter their prisoners of war, and the animals they captured from their foes; all exactly as their Moabite neighbours are reported, in very much the same language,[1] to have done to Chemosh, the god of Moab. Moreover, they regarded the power of Jahweh as limited to their own territory, and His worship as invalid beyond it.[2] Though, like all Semites, they felt their duty to one God as the supreme Lord of themselves, they did not deny the reality of other gods.[1] Again, like other Semites, early Israel associated their God with certain physical forces. The manifestations of Jahweh took place in the rain, the thunderstorm, the lightning and the fire; His voice was heard in the stir of the trees before the wind.[2] Again, the ritual of Israel is full of exact analogies to the ritual of Semitic sanctuaries from Cyprus to Southern Arabia. The sacrifice of certain animals at certain seasons of the year; the smearing of lintels and other objects with blood; the anointing of pillars in honour of the Deity; the presence of human sacrifices with as much infrequency and sense of the awful crisis that demands them as elsewhere in the Semitic world; the worship of images by Jacob's family, by David, and at the sanctuaries of the Northern Kingdom; the discovery of the Deity's will through dreams, in ecstasy or by lot; the attestation of the Divine word by physical signs accompanying it; circumcision;

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[1] The Moabite Stone.

[2] I Sam. xxvi. 19.

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[1] Not even by the Second Commandment, which is not a declaration of monotheism, but only the obligation to have Jahweh, of all the gods, as their sole god. It is difficult to say when the sense of the reality of other gods died out in Israel. It is confessed by David: it is implicit in the absence of all missionary effort in pre-prophetic times, and the remembrance of it lingers even in so monotheistic a Book as Deuteronomy; one of the verses in which, iv. 17, is a curious compromise between the belief in the reality of the heathen gods and that in the divine sovereignty of Jahweh. Not till Jeremiah and the second Isaiah do we find language used of the idols which expresses unambiguously the writer's belief in their nothingness.

[2] Genesis iii. 8; 2 Sam. v. 23 ff.

the law of blood-revenge and its mitigation by the rights of sanctuary; the sacrifice of spoil of war to the Deity: all these things have not only for the most part the same names as in other Semitic languages, but — except for a higher moral character which, however, only sometimes distinguishes them — they are the same as among other Semites, in intention and details of execution. And finally (as we shall see in another Lecture, so that we need not go into detail upon the subject now), early Israel had as little religious interest as other Semites in a future life. Except in the case of one or two heroes[1] this was not connected with the Deity: if men inquired of it they did so not by religion but by magic and necromancy. The reason of such a separation between religion and the future life was precisely that which accounts for it elsewhere in the Semitic world. The unit of religion was the living tribe: they were the interest and care of the Deity; with whom the individual had no part or portion except in his place as a living member of the tribe.

It is plain, then, that to whatever heights the religion of Israel afterwards rose, it remained before the age of the great prophets not only similar to, but in all respects above-mentioned identical with, the general Semitic religion; which was not a monotheism, but a polytheism with an opportunity for monotheism at the heart of it — each tribe being attached to one god, as to their particular Lord and Father.

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[1] Enoch and Elijah.

Our next question is whether any of the forces which could take advantage of this opportunity for monotheism[1] were present in Israel to a greater degree than we have found them among the other Semites.

To begin with the *political*, — we find that up to the eighth century the history of Israel was largely one of conquest. In the belief of the people this history had been started by the victories of their God over one of the great empires of the world. Jahweh had brought His people out of Egypt, divided the sea, led them through the desert and dispossessed the nations of Canaan before them. These experiences must have lifted Israel's ideas of Jahweh very much above the level of the respect entertained for their deities by nations who remembered nothing of their own history except as transacted within the narrow bounds of their territories. We have more than one proof that the faltering faith of early Israel in the power of Jahweh was wont to refresh itself by the memory of those great events. This, however, as we have seen, did not cure even the leaders of the people of their belief in the reality of other gods; and indeed the settlement in Canaan, so far from extending, in their regard, Jahweh of Sinai's power over that land, brought them under the fascination of its native gods, the patrons of its agriculture. With such experiences others conspired, especially when, under Solomon and Ahab, Israel entered into commerce with foreign peoples and concluded political alliances; for such relations involved the erection of shrines to alien gods side by side with the altars of Jahweh. It is certain, then, that without the presence of other influences, Israel's political history would have been powerless to produce her monotheism.[1]

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[1] See above, p. 122.

Nor can we describe these influences as *intellectual*. Early Israel does not seem to have had more of the power of sustained speculation than her Semitic neighbours. As we have seen, there is little argument in the Old Testament for the being, and none for the unity, of God. The cosmogony of the first chapter of Genesis belongs to the youngest of the Pentateuchal documents, and is of date subsequent to that at which the ethical foundations of monotheism were already laid by the prophets. The eighth chapter of the Book of Proverbs, sometimes called 'the only metaphysic in the Bible,' is probably of a still later origin. And whatever the date of the Book of Job may be, its arguments on God are not those of the head, but those of the heart and conscience.

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[1] Professor Budde has acutely remarked in his recent lectures on *The Religion of Israel before the Exile*, (p. 71), that the contact with other gods did not altogether mean religious loss for Israel. They probably learned in Canaan to associate the more beneficent forces of nature with the Deity, as they saw them exemplified in the native gods, and they transferred the attributes of these to Him. This is true, but the transference would not have taken place, or at least would not have been unaccompanied by the grosser features of those gods, unless from other sources Israel had been convinced of the higher ethical character of Jahweh.

We turn, therefore, to Israel's *ethical* attainments before the eighth century, and here, in the opinion of all critics, we at last find proofs of the distinction of her religion from that of other Semites, and the sources of the monotheism which culminated in her prophetical writings.

By the beginning of the pre-prophetic period the Jahwist and Elohist documents[1] were extant in Israel. We have already seen the high conceptions which govern the Jahwist's account of the origin and early civilisation of man. In the stories of Jacob and Joseph we are presented with portraits of character which display great powers of ethical reflection, and in the story of Joseph reveal the purest and most tender of moral ideals. The responsibility of the individual to God in matters deeper than those of a tribal morality is taken for granted. *How can I do this great wickedness and sin against Jahweh?* says Joseph in answer to the chief temptation of his life;[1] and again he explains the motive of his treatment of his brethren in the words, *for I fear God.*[2] Throughout these early documents God's care of the individual is beautifully illustrated.

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[1] With the exception of some later strata, which I shall avoid in the following ethical estimate of the documents.

Now it may be, as some critics hold, that these documents, in the form in which we possess them, were composed after the teaching of the eighth-century prophets had begun to work in Israel. Yet even allowing this, we must assign to the processes of ethical reflection which blossomed in them a considerably earlier date. The possibility is confirmed by those stories of David which cannot be much later than David's own time. In those we have already found[3] the records of a character whose essentially Semitic features do not show more real to nature than the higher qualities which dramatically mingle with them. This lofty ethic appears in connection with the national God. David's sin is discovered to him by a prophet of Jahweh: it is before Jahweh that the guilty king repents and humbles himself. A century and a half later we have confirmatory evidence of the morale of Israel's religious leaders. Micaiah ben Imlah breaks from the racial idea, that the tribal God must necessarily give his tribe the victory, and at the risk of martyrdom proclaims from Jahweh Ahab's defeat.[1] As we saw in last Lecture,[2] the zeal of Elijah for Jahweh is inexplicable except on the belief that Jahweh's character is absolutely different from that of other deities. The prophet's intolerance of the latter must have had ethical reasons; and this view is confirmed by the manner in which Elijah enforces Jahweh's claims, not only against the Phœnician deities but, in the teeth of Ahab and Israel themselves; predicts the employment of a foreign nation by Jahweh to punish Israel; and champions against the injustice of the king the rights of the subject in the case of Naboth and his vineyard. We see, then, that before the eighth century the ethics of Israel had already burst the bonds of a tribal morality within which other Semitic religions were still confined. This is what we should have expected from the appearance of so largely developed an ethical monotheism in the prophets of the eighth century. It would be unscientific to wholly doubt their testimony that the principles they enforce were not new in Israel. A religion such as theirs is no isolated creation.

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[1] Gen. xxxix. 9.

[2] Gen. xlii. 18.

[3] See Lecture III., pp. 79 ff.

We have now to ask, what were the sources of those ethical features in the religion of early Israel, which so largely prepared the way for the monotheism of the prophets and helped to render the creed of Israel so conspicuous an exception in the religion of the Semites?

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[1] 1 Kings xxii.

[2] Pp. 82 f.

Among modern critics there is virtual unanimity in carrying back the origin of Israel's ethical distinction to the time of Moses, and in regarding him as its instrument. Kuenen, for instance, who is so careful to claim the prophets as the creators of ethical monotheism, admits that, though Jahweh of early Israel and Chemosh of Moab (for example) were branches of the same stock, 'sons of the same house,' there must have been in the Jahweh religion from the very beginning the germs of that development which it afterwards achieved in such marvellous distinction from all the other faiths from whose level it had started. But though the origins of Israel's distinction are thus generally assigned to the Mosaic period, there is some difference of opinion as to what was their exact cause. Israel in the time of Moses enjoyed the same motives to ethical development as we have seen existing in other Semitic tribes. The close association of the deity with the tribal morals and public justice presented many opportunities of reflection on his character, which the honest and able minds among his accredited representatives can scarcely have failed to employ, with the result of raising the tribal conception of the divine commands, and the ethical ideal generally. How did Israel alone succeed in taking advantage of such opportunities? It is not enough to answer that her intellect must have been quicker and more reflective than that of other Semites; nor, as we have seen, that Israel's political history, which so powerfully assisted her religious development, was itself the cause of that.

A more probable origin for the ethical superiority of Israel has been sought in another direction. Historians of the world's faiths have learned to distinguish between nature religions and historical religions; between those which represent the original connection of a deity with his worshippers as physical, and those which describe the deity as drawing near to his people and becoming known to them through events in their history. The faith of Israel was of the latter kind. The people's memory traced their relations with Jahweh to what their earliest historians call a *covenant* between Him and them. Their prophets appeal to what has evidently been a long-established belief among the people, that Jahweh had not always been the god of Israel, but that He found them at a crisis in their history, and offered His help in return for their obedience. He had chosen them, and they had taken Him as their lord and god. The true metaphor for this relation was not paternal but conjugal: it rested on a contract. In Israel's belief in this transaction some historians of her early religion find the germs of her rapid ethical development.[1] It does not seem to me, however, to exhaust the secret of which we are in search. For Israel alone did not recognise reciprocal duties between themselves and their God; other peoples, however physical they conceived the origin of their relations with their deities to be, interpreted these relations as involving mutual responsibilities between each god and his nation. Their histories gave them also opportunities of reflecting on the meaning of their god's anger with them as experienced in their defeats and the devastation of their lands. Nevertheless, they were not thereby inspired to the ethical development which we see in Israel. Or look within Israel. The popular religion which the prophets attacked, itself contained the idea of a contract between the nation and Jahweh, and was conscious that His fulfilment of that contract demanded obedience and gratitude from His people.[1] Yet the popular religion of Israel did not therefore become ethical: on the contrary, the prophet's charge against it was that it was devoid of morality, and was inspired only by formal and superstitious notions of what Jahweh required of the people.

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[1] Professor Budde has given a very able and reasonable statement of this hypothesis in the first of his American Lectures on *The Religion of Israel up to the Exile.* 'Israel accepted Jahve's offer to be its god; and relying on his promise through Moses to deliver it found he kept his word and felt that it owed him gratitude and fidelity in return for the boon.' 'He was unknown to it before. It knew, however, this much from experience, that he was a great and powerful god who could help if he would. It could adopt his worship only with fear and dread, always in doubt whether it had fathomed the depths of his nature, whether its actions found favour with Jahve and would be regarded as sufficient proof of fidelity. Whenever things went badly with the people, it was far from thinking that Jahve had not power to help. On the contrary, its conscience awaked each time to the questions: "Wherein have I deserved the displeasure of Jahve? What must I do to ensure his favour?" Thus arose a really living force whose operation tended to the ethical development of Israel's religion. . . . The germ of this whole development took place at Sinai. . . .'

Hence the prophets who combat the popular religion of Israel declare that the people must form new notions of the terms on which Jahweh made His covenant, or, which comes to the same thing, that they must form new notions of Jahweh Himself. The prophets constantly complain of the people's ignorance, and urge them *to know Jahweh* Himself. If we believe the prophets, as everybody does believe them, when they say that Israel's relation to her God was based not on physical connection with Him, but upon a historical covenant, we ought not to refuse their further testimony that this covenanting Deity had from the first revealed His moral attributes. This is confirmed by all we can gather from the genuine records of Israel's history before the prophets. Although we are uncertain whether any written law has reached us from

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[1] This is plain from the account which Amos gives of the zeal of the popular religion in his day.

Moses himself, we cannot but believe, on the evidence at our disposal, in the existence in Israel from his time onwards of what was a more powerful factor of ethical development than any written code could have been: a consciousness of the character of the Deity such as no other Semitic people possessed. In other words, the covenant itself was not the factor which told in early Israel's ethical development, but knowledge of the God behind the covenant, and appreciation of His moral attributes.

It is true that early Israel's view of the Divine character is limited and disturbed by those ancestral conceptions of Deity which were common to themselves and their Semitic kinsfolk. The first beginnings of the higher faith had to express themselves in the language, through the symbols, and even in the intellectual conceptions, with which the men to whom they came were already familiar in connection with religion. The development, therefore, of whatever new ethical principles or influences met Israel in the time of Moses could only be gradual. And thus the Jahweh of early Israel shared much of the same character, and was believed to reveal Himself in many of the same forms which the other Semites associated with their gods. Yet from the first Israel must have seen in Jahweh attributes of a higher kind than any of their neighbours attributed to the Divine character.

We must observe, too, this remarkable fact: that the rapid moral growth of early Israel never runs away from the character of the national God. Other ancient nations achieved ethical progress at the expense of their religion. Their gods were left behind and laughed at as the conscience of the worshippers developed. But Jahweh was never found wanting by Israel, and never discredited by any new conception of truth or by any strange experience in their history. Every fresh moral ideal is confessed by the people as the impression of His character and will; and for each new problem raised by their contact with the world their faith in Him is found sufficient.

Such are the facts of the early religion of Israel which the critical[1] study of it, in comparison with other Semitic religions, presents in answer to our question about the Old Testament as the record of a Divine Revelation. Are they sufficient to prove the claims of Israel, that God Himself spoke directly to this people in the events of their national history from the beginning, and by the mouths of their leaders from Moses to Elijah? We have seen how thoroughly Semitic the religion of early Israel was in frame and fibre; and not less how in it alone of all Semitic faiths there dwelt an ethical spirit — the only promise in all that Semitic world of a true monotheism, and a promise which was actually fulfilled by the great Hebrew prophets. We have seen how all attempts to account for this religious uniqueness of Israel by their physical or historical conditions have failed, because these conditions were equally shared by Israel's Semitic kinsfolk. We have seen that the gradual ethical development, which thus differentiated Israel from her neighbours, appears to have begun with the introduction to the nation of Jahweh as their God; and that every stage of its progress was achieved in connection with some impression of His character.

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[1] That is, based only on such parts of the Old Testament as are admitted by the textual and historical criticism of the Old Testament to be evidence of the pre-prophetic religion of Israel.

It seems to me that there are here the lines of an apologetic, for a Divine Revelation through early Israel, more sure and clear than any which the traditional interpretation of the Old Testament ever attempted to lay down. That is all I seek to prove. There are those who refuse altogether to believe in the possibility of the Christian idea of Revelation; and with them other arguments must be employed. But if we are Christians, and hold that man's education in the knowledge of God is not exclusively a human process, that the Mind which our minds, and the Heart which our hearts, seek behind the phenomena of nature and history, cannot be less urgent or forward than our own in the desire and effort to meet, then we cannot doubt that the history of early Israel, as critically interpreted, was an authentic and a unique stage in the process of Revelation — that Israel were receiving through their national God real impressions of the character and mind of the Deity.

Obviously this could not flash upon them all at once. The Revelation of the Unity of God and of His perfect Holiness, as we know it, would have been no real revelation to a people on the level of Israel from the fourteenth to the ninth centuries before Christ. It would have hovered in the air, out of reach of their primitive conceptions and undeveloped conscience: impalpable, impossible. Had one dreamed it, there was no language capable of its tradition. The character of God had to be proved upon the only floor on which men then expected to see the interest of the Deity in morals: that is to say, within the narrow limits of the tribal life and through the tribal institutions. The will of God, in order to be understood, had to be expressed, not merely in the spoken dialect of the people, but in the dearer language of religious symbol and sacrament, already consecrated by the use of many generations. The mind of God had to make its way to the mind of man through older intellectual conceptions of the Deity, which, as we have seen, clung about the people's notions of Jahweh for centuries after Moses. But just because of its adoption of the practical realities and religious symbols of the life on which it descended, the new Spirit secured a habitation in the mind of the people and the means of tradition and development. Among all the errors and limitations which the past had bequeathed, the impressions of the righteous character of God worked as a leaven. They elevated gradually the great body of unwritten custom and legislation which Israel had derived from their Semitic fathers; they moulded the nation in discipline and taught them gratitude and loyalty to their Head; they proved themselves active beyond the tribal territory and life; they helped the mind of Israel to rise to every problem which its widening horizon presented.

But the divinity of the process is vindicated beyond itself. It carried Israel through the crises of the eighth century, when every god of their neighbours was discredited, but Jahweh by the moral character, slowly revealed as His through the previous ages, was trusted by His people as the wielder of the world's forces. It produced the monotheism of the Prophets. And finally Christ confirmed it as the gradual preparation by God for the full revelation of Himself in the life and death of His Son.

# LECTURE V

## THE SPIRIT OF CHRIST IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

The older theologies approached our present subject in a way different from that which I ask you to follow. Of Christ in the Old Testament they have mainly treated under the heads of Typology and Messianic Prophecy. These are departments of Biblical Doctrine for which we have the warrant of the New Testament. As usually treated, however, they are either too wide or too narrow for the illustration of the Spirit of Christ under the Old Covenant.

Too wide — for to the preacher, as the history of the Christian pulpit has painfully proved, their vagueness has been a constant temptation to overdo them. In their elastic range, and the ambiguous quality of many of their details, the spoiled children of the pulpit have taken a larger licence than even among the predictions and apocalypse of the New Testament. Venturing beyond the furthest hint of the Apostolic writers, preachers have spun their allegories of Christ out of every plausible character and transaction in Old Testament history and poetry; or have assiduously polished each rite and institution of the Jewish Law in the attempt to make it a mirror of our Lord and His Sacrifice. It would not be unjust to call those mere flatterers of their Lord, who, without moral insight or real devotion, have heaped upon Him indiscriminately all the titles of Old Testament History, and symbolised every detail of Jewish worship as if it were the ingenuity of their efforts and the quantity of their results which were well-pleasing to Him, or capable of convincing the doubter of His Divinity. The fancy, that to discover some type or prediction of Christ where nobody else had seen one before was to honour Christ and confound His enemies, has been the besetting sin both of mediæval and of Protestant styles of exegesis; and nothing has been more guilty of rendering sermons on the Old Testament artificial and unreal. How different is the liberal and patient temper of Calvin! He examines every alleged type and prediction. He says this is 'too forced'; that 'too fine.' 'In these things we require not cleverness but *quid solidum*,' something reliable, something sane. And therefore, when he does admit a type or prophecy of Christ, he makes us sure of it. We know that he seeks to learn what God means rather than to find what his own ingenuity can prove. He is jealous to serve his Lord with truth.[1]

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[1] The same spirit, struggling with far heavier difficulties, is seen

But if Typology and Messianic Prophecy are in some directions too vague to show us Christ aright in the Old Testament, in others they are too narrow. There are many passages which breathe His Spirit, and which have never been included among 'the types' or Messianic predictions. I do not suppose, for instance, that under one or other of these heads either the Song of Deborah or the Elegy upon Saul and Jonathan was ever gathered by a theologian; and indeed Matthew Henry, on the ground that the Elegy does not name the Name of God, calls it 'a humane composure,' a piece of non-religious literature. I hope to show that both of those early poems breathe the Spirit of Christ, and that this Spirit is shared by many other passages, which no system of Typology or Prophecy has ventured to include.

Again, every one, who is familiar with the efforts of Christian preaching to illustrate or explain the Sacrifice of Christ from the Old Testament, is aware how the emphasis of the argument is almost always laid upon the animal sacrifices of the Levitical legislation, and how the human sacrifices of Old Testament history — the sufferings of the righteous and the vicarious strife and agony of the heroes of Israel — are

in Theodore of Mopsuestia (d. 429 A.D.), the greatest Old Testament exegete among the early fathers: cf. the just title accorded him in Sieffert's work, *Theod. Mopsuestenus Vet. Test. sobrie interpretandi Vindex* (1827). See below, Lecture VII.

either forgotten or used only for the peroration. An equal error has been made in the Old Testament argument for our Lord's Divinity: the proofs have been sought in strained interpretations of the essentially human attributes and offices of the Messianic King, instead of in those affections and struggles for the salvation of men which the Old Testament imputes to God Himself.

The following Lecture is the attempt to place the whole subject of the prophecy of Christ in the Old Testament and the presence of His Spirit in the history of Israel upon historical and ethical lines, in place of those so largely followed by theologians and preachers in treating of Typology, Messianic Prophecy and the Argument from the Old Testament for our Lord's Divinity and His Sacrifice.

## I. *From the Earliest Times to David.*

We will most suitably start upon our task from the point which was reached in the close of last Lecture. We saw that the main factor in the development of the religion of Israel was the impression upon the people, through the events of their history and the consciousness of their greatest men, of the character of God. This it was which separated the people from the heathen around them, quickened within them a new moral sense, sifted and qualified the mass of custom and unwritten law which they had inherited as children of the great Semitic family, and finally produced both prophecy and the legal codes, in which the principles of prophecy and the hereditary practice of the nation were together precipitated.

But we must not suppose that this revelation of the character of God was confined to His righteousness, or was even predominantly that of His righteousness. That is one of the most widespread fallacies about the Old Testament. Mr. Matthew Arnold, who is almost as brilliant an instance of the method of writing history by intuition as Renan himself, never made more manifest the perils of such a method than when he defined the essence of Israel's religion as a tendency or force, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness. More patient workers in the field have fallen into the same error. Nothing is more certain about the object of Israel's faith than first, that it was a Person; and second, that the character of this Person was by no means only or predominantly righteousness. Jahweh is as effectively a God of grace as He is a God of justice; and although our meagre information requires us to speak with caution of the earliest period of Israel's religion, it is sufficiently well-established that during that period His grace was (to say the least) as manifest to His people's hearts, and as operative in their lives, as His

Justice: for the full expression of which we have to wait till the prophets. In this connection criticism has done no disservice to the Christian preacher by removing from the pre-prophetic stage of the religion the vast bulk of the Law; for it has thereby left him the more free to appreciate throughout these long centuries the love and faithfulness of Israel's God. Our information, as I have said, is meagre, but it is enough. We cannot doubt the servitude of Israel in Egypt, nor their deliverance under Moses, in obedience as they believed to the impulse of Jahweh; nor their sojourn in the Desert, when, as water is spilled upon the sand, so Israel's distinctive character might have passed from them, and except for the patience and watchfulness of their God they might have sunk back into the nomadic life from which their fathers had sprung. No one doubts their arrival in a land, where again their unity might have been dissipated amidst the geographical conditions, but a national career and destiny became possible by their trust that Jahweh, in spite of their frequent unfaithfulness to Him, continued to preserve and to lead them. The notes of grace — of Divine redemption and guidance — were thus in the religion of Israel from the very first. We may not have many, or any, authentic expressions of this from the period itself; but after it, in a number of the most ancient fragments of the Old Testament, the remembrance appears. In Deborah's song Jahweh's people are his *lovers*.[1] The good-will of Jahweh to help His nation against their foes comes as an inspiration to Gideon.[2] In the movement of ecstatic prophecy which broke out in Israel under Samuel, we see the power of the sense of the 'Rûᵃḥ' or *Spirit of Jahweh*, — His personal energy — granted to His people to inspire them to victory over their Philistine oppressors. The movement is the passion of a people for their God, who affects them not only by His righteousness, the full force of which they obviously did not yet comprehend, but by His redemption of them from servitude, His patience with their disloyalties, His faithfulness to them in face of their foes. It is the early Jahwist (or Elohist) who gives the proclamation to Moses: *Jahweh, Jahweh a compassionate and gracious God slow to anger and plenteous in mercy and truth*.[3] Such words may be a more explicit sense of the Divine Law than the Mosaic Age in Israel had achieved; but in any case the germs of the higher consciousness of God, which, as Kuenen admits, were present in the Mosaic Age, were germs of the consciousness not of His justice merely but still more of His mercy and faithfulness. The long poem in the thirty-second chapter of Deuteronomy, which is probably not later than the eighth century, and which so accurately represents the passage of early Israel from the nomadic life of the desert to the agriculture of Canaan,[1] as beautifully ascribes it to Jahweh's fatherly providence of the nation when

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[1] Judges v. 31*a*. E. Meier, Winter and Budde reckon this verse to be a later addition to the Song of Deborah: 'in the style of the Psalms' (Budde); but, in my opinion, on insufficient grounds.

[2] Judges vi. 11 ff.

[3] Ex. xxxiv. 6.

*In a wilderness land He found him,*
*In the waste and the howling desert;*
*He encompassed him, yea kept His eye upon him*
*As the apple of His eye, so He watched him.*
*As an eagle which stirreth his nest,*
*And fluttereth over his young,*
*And spreadeth his wings to catch them,*
*And beareth them up on his pinions,*
*Jahweh alone was his leader,*
*And never a strange God was with him.*

The prophets of the eighth century are full of wonder at Jahweh's love for Israel and His choice of them to be His people; at His long patience with them and constant forgiveness of their rebellion and sin. The elements of this wonder cannot be wholly from the prophetic age; the same sense, however dim, must have stirred Israel from the first.

So at least we seem to see in the very early Song of Deborah. The attraction of such a God, and the loyalty which His loyalty calls forth, are there represented as the factors of the national unity. These dozen desert tribes, cursed with the incoherence of Semitic life, were brought together and kept together by their common trust in their Deity. When, after the settlement in Palestine, among the diverse opportunities which the broken geography of the land so remarkably affords, they were tempted to separate from their common interests upon widely divergent lines of culture,[1] it was, as the Book of Judges testifies, not by a return to the Law that they were united but by the recollection of their debt to Jahweh. In Deborah's as in Gideon's case, memory was the nurse to faith, and the conviction of His unfaltering desire to help them rallied the people against their foreign tyrants. The opening verse of Deborah's Song gives us the whole secret of the national inspiration in a tribute of glory to Jahweh:

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[1] See *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, pp. 85–90.

*For that the leaders took the lead in Israel,*
*For that the people offered themselves willingly,*[2]
*Praise ye Jahweh!*

In the end of the Song which thus grandly opens, we are repelled by the savage exultation of a woman over the treacherous murder of a defeated foe. And rightly; for Christ has given us the right to judge. But do we pay as much attention to the virtues which are manifest in the Song? Nowhere do we find a more scathing exposure of those who prefer the material ambitions of life, however legitimate, to the call of national need in the name of the religious ideal;[1] and nowhere is self-sacrifice more finely celebrated.

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[1] Judges iv. 15*b*–17.

[2] The exact meaning of these two lines is obscure; but their intention is plain.

*Zebulun was a people that jeoparded their lives*
*to the death,*
*And Naphtali on the high places of the field.*[2]

Whatever views we have of war — and we are those who themselves owe their religious liberty to the virtues of the battlefield — let us remember what war did for Israel. *By war*, says Jahweh elsewhere, *I took you*,[3] and we may extend the meaning of these words beyond the mere fact that so He helped them to freedom, to the moral assurance that by the call to fight He redeemed them from selfishness, from servitude to material aims, from schism and disloyalty to Himself. The battlefield was the Golgotha of early Israel. It was there that Zebulun and Naphtali laid down their lives for the brethren; and there that the Spirit of Christ which was in Israel from the beginning won its earliest triumphs. When we hear a Psalmist sing (in a Psalm for which there are more reasons for a pre-exilic date than for any other in the Psalter) —

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[1] Judges iv. 15*b*–17. [2] Verse 18. [3] Deut. iv. 34.

*By thee do I break through a fence,*
*And by my God do I leap over a wall —*
*He maketh my feet like hinds' feet*
*He teacheth my hands to war,*
*So that a steel bar is broken by my arms.*
*Thou hast enlarged my steps under me*
*So that my ancles swerve not*[1] —

we ought to remember the issues at stake in Israel's wars, and the virtues which these evoked. In the next verse the Psalmist gives the secret of it all: *Thy gentleness hath made me great.*[2] The heroism, the self-sacrifice, the loyalty to the nation and to Jahweh were the warrior's devotion to the tender and faithful character of his God.

The poem next earliest to Deborah's Song, David's Dirge upon Saul and Jonathan, is another illustration of the same Spirit. It is all the more valuable to our present purpose that it is one of the few specimens of the popular poetry of early Israel. The Dirge is not religious in the narrower sense of the term. It is without the name of God: it says no word of the service of the dead, whom it praises, to the religion of their nation. And above all, it does not commit their spirits to God, nor express any hope of a future life.[3] On these grounds the great Puritan commentator,

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[1] Psalm xviii. 29, 33, 34.

[2] Verse 35.

[3] This will be dealt with in the next Lecture.

Matthew Henry — a man of firm belief in the inspiration of the Bible and of rare insight into its meaning — has called the Dirge, as I have already said, 'a humane composure,' an extract from a book of popular ballads with the authorship of which the Holy Spirit has had nothing to do. But Christ has said, *Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord;* and again, *By their fruits shall ye know them.* Judged by that standard, the absence of the Divine Name from this poem will not prevent us from appreciating its truly Christian spirit. The Dirge is by a man upon his dead enemy and his dead friend. But for the former there is no word save of generosity and admiration. Saul had relentlessly hunted David, and upon more than one occasion had attempted his life. Latterly he had been a bad king to Israel, and his death, with the defeat it brought upon the nation, had been due to his own errors. David is not only silent upon these, but remembers nothing of the persecutions to which Saul had subjected him. That the poem is animated, not merely by a poet's heart for the virtues of a great man, but by the spirit of personal forgiveness for very cruel wrongs, is proved by the whole attitude of David to the living Saul and his house. David spared his hunter's life, and showed kindness to his children. Criticism has no doubt to cast upon the story, according to which the service of David's youth had been the attempt to win the king from his evil moods by skilful playing on the harp. Here was the secret of David's attitude to Saul through the persecution which he suffered from him. The life of his tormentor, which he spared when he had the power to take it, and which he praised when the king by his own error lay dead on Gilboa, had once been intrusted to him by Jahweh to redeem from the powers of evil for the service of God and the people. But this is the Spirit of Christ. Though the Dirge upon Saul finds no place in any theologian's system of 'types,' it is yet one of the most beautiful anticipations which the Old Testament has to offer us of Christ's teaching: *But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.*

These instances from the early history of Israel are enough to prove to you and me, as preachers of the Gospel, that, accepting the results of modern criticism, we shall yet be sure of finding across that whole stretch of the Old Testament — upon which its effects have been most feared, and where we must confess the life to be very rude, the ethics to be primitive, and monotheism itself to be undeveloped — the presence of Divine Grace, of the Spirit of Christ, and of the virtues of forgivingness and self-sacrifice which these call forth in men.

## II. *The Prophets.*

The teaching of the Eighth-Century Prophets foreshadows the gospel of Jesus upon its great texts of Forgiveness; Repentance; *the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand;* and the coming of the Perfect King or Messiah.

Upon the two first of these themes Hosea has all the essence of the evangel; which indeed quotes his great saying: *I will have mercy and not sacrifice.* Through terrible personal suffering inflicted by one whom he loved, Hosea was led to understand how men's sins cost God more pain than anger.[1] From that moment the Gospel of Divine Forgiveness was assured. And just because she, whom the prophet was himself moved to forgive and redeem, was an individual, we may believe that, while the nation still continued with Hosea to be the unit of religion, he planted in Israel's faith the seeds which Jeremiah developed of the confidence that God too in forgiveness deals with the single souls of men. Upon Repentance Hosea's teaching is startlingly evangelical. The care with which he follows every symptom of it in his people;[2] the ethical sternness with which he repels their easy optimism regarding it;[3] the labour he takes to distinguish its true character from the sorrow of this world,[4] and founds it on a new Knowledge of God and of His love,[1] in short, on a real change of mind —all this anticipates in a wonderful way the Metanoia of the Gospels and Epistles.[2]

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[1] Chaps. i.–iii. [2] v. 15, vii. 1, xi. 7 ff., xii. 6, xiii. 7, xiv. 1.

[3] Ch. v. 15–vi. 6. [4] *Ibid.* and vii. 14.

Unlike his younger contemporary, Amos cannot be called an evangelical prophet: it is Law rather than Love in the Divine Nature on which he dwells; yet he too had his part in the evangelical preparation. That passage, which least of all Old Testament literature looks like Gospel, the first and second chapters of Amos, is a real intimation that *the Kingdom is at hand.* It is the proclamation of the truth that all men are morally equal, and that to the righteousness of Jahweh not only Israel, but every one of her heathen neighbours, is responsible. Such is the necessary ethical basis for the preaching of repentance and forgiveness to the Gentiles. The missionary spirit of Israel will take centuries yet to awaken; but this is its womb: this sense, for the first time expressed in the Old Testament, of the moral equality of all men before God.

In Isaiah's prophecies we meet with the first of those descriptions of the coming King which Christian theology regards as direct predictions of Christ. The Greek version of the very difficult prophecy of Immanuel is quoted by St. Matthew as the statement of the Birth of Jesus from the Virgin:[1] *Behold the Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel.* The Hebrew original[2] is indefinite, and means *some marriageable woman.* Isaiah meant no more than that some one should be born whose character and hopes should be proof that God was with His people. Whether the promised Unborn was an individual, or a future generation of Israel, it is difficult to make out; but probably the latter is what Isaiah intends. This would not impair the legitimacy of Matthew's reference of the prophecy to Jesus, to whom prophetic descriptions of the people of Jahweh are equally transferred with the predictions of their coming King.[3] Against the authenticity of other Messianic passages, of the Prince with the Four Names and the Ideal Ruler, strong reasons have been adduced[4]; but these cannot be regarded as conclusive. The premises of the passages — the firm hold which the Davidic dynasty had secured in Judah, the memory of David himself as an ideal king, the need in the time of King Ahaz for a monarch strong, just and loyal to Jahweh — were all present in Isaiah's day. The tasks assigned by the passages to the victorious Prince and righteous Judge are exactly those on which the whole ministry of Isaiah was bent, while they are not such as were necessary in the Exilic Age to which the passages have been relegated by some critics.[1]

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[1] iv. 6, vi. 6, xi. 3-4, xiii. 4.

[2] A full exposition of Hosea's teaching on forgiveness and Repentance will be found in *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, i. chaps. xxi.-xxiii.

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[1] Matt. i. 22, 23.

[2] Isaiah vii. 14.

[3] Cf. Matthew's application (ii. 15) to Jesus of Hosea's description of Israel's call out of Egypt (xi. 1).

[4] Isaiah ix. 6 f.; xi. 1-5.

In any case the application of these prophecies to Jesus Christ must be made with discrimination. They have been too hastily used as predictions of the Godhead of the Messiah. But not even do the names in Chapter ix. 6 f. imply Deity; while all the functions attributed to the Promised King are human. Isaiah's Messiah is an earthly monarch, of the stock of David, and with offices that are political, both military and judicial. He is not the mediator of spiritual gifts to his people: forgiveness, a new knowledge of God, and the like. It is only in this, that he saves the people of God from destruction and reigns over them with justice and in the fear of God, that he can be regarded as a type of Jesus Christ.[2]

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[1] Against the authenticity of Isaiah ix. 6 f. and xi. 1–5, see Hackmann, *Die Zukunftserwartung des Jesaia*, 1893; Cheyne, *Introduction to the Book of Isaiah*, 1895; and for the historical theory which relegates all predictions of the Messiah to the Exilic Age, cf. Marti, *Geschichte der Israel. Religion*, p. 190; and Paul Volz, *Die vorexil. Prophetie u. der Messias*, 1897. On the other hand, Driver, Kirkpatrick, Duhm, Skinner, Budde and a majority of critics leave the passages in question with Isaiah. For the arguments on both sides, and the conclusion that those for the authenticity are the stronger, see the present writer's article on 'Isaiah' in Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*, ii. pp. 487 ff.

[2] So the present writer in Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*, ii. 491.

In the belief that chapters xl.–lxvi. of the Book of Isaiah were from himself, Isaiah has been called by Christians the Evangelical Prophet. These chapters, however, we now know to be by the great evangelist of the Exile.[1] To a gospel for the spiritual life of the individual, Hosea makes a far closer approach than his greater contemporary; yet even in the genuine work of Isaiah we find the elements of the doctrines of Grace. Jahweh forgives sins, even the most heinous and defiling.[2] His love and pity never fail His people's penitence.[3] He is their well-beloved, and constantly cares for them.[4] It is His passion for them which is the spring and assurance of all their deliverance.[5] Of these truths Isaiah became himself convinced through his individual experience of pardon and of cleansing.[6]

Isaiah, however, was too much engaged with the fate of his nation to become the preacher of that personal religion, of which the proofs were given him in his inaugural vision. Even in the following century, in the great Law-book which codifies the teaching of the eighth century prophets, the unit of religion is still Israel as a whole. Deuteronomy is the most perfect example the world has seen of a system of national religion, but it addresses itself to the nation. The individual is treated only as a member of the nation, and there is no promise for humanity beyond, nor conscience of Israel's 'missionary' duty except to the *strangers* who settle in the land. Yet the high monotheism of the Book, along with its tenderness and humanity; its enforcement (in dependence on Hosea) of the love of God, based on a true knowledge of His character, and its care for the education of the young, secure for Deuteronomy a place in the evangelical preparation. Its influence on the domestic and personal religion of Israel in all ages has never been exceeded by that of any other Book in the Canon. Our Lord not only quoted from it the expression of the essence of the Law,[1] but sustained upon its words His own soul in the conflict with Temptation.[2] There are few books in the Old Testament, the regular exposition of which will more profit a Christian preacher and his people.

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[1] See above, pp. 53 f.

[2] Isa. i. 18.

[3] Isa. xiv. 32; xxxvi.–xxxvii.

[4] Isa. v. 1 ff.

[5] Isa. ix. 7, etc.

[6] Isa. vi. 5 ff.

This brings us to Jeremiah, who, beyond every other in the old dispensation, was the forerunner of Jesus Christ: and that both in his teaching and in his personal experience.[3]

Jeremiah began his career as a prophet about 627, before the discovery of Deuteronomy in the

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[1] Matt. xxii. 37 f.; Mark xii. 29 f.; Luke x. 27.

[2] Matt. iv. 4 and 7; Luke iv. 4, 8; cf. Deut. viii. 3; vi. 13, 16; x. 20.

[3] He was expected by the Jews of our Lord's day to return to earth: cf. Matt. xvi. 14, *some say . . . Jeremias.*

Temple, and he watched the progress of the reforms which it inspired under the reign of Josiah. With many of these he must have sympathised; and he frequently quotes from the letter of the Book. But besides his hostility to the formal obedience which his contemporaries showed to *the Law*, Jeremiah's ideal of religion was in advance of that of Deuteronomy. His monotheism was more free of the older conceptions of the Deity: to him at last the idols are *vanities* or *nothingnesses*, empty of reality: in Deuteronomy they are still subordinate deities whom Jahweh has *assigned to all the nations under heaven.*[1] We have evidence also of another attitude than that of the Deuteronomist to sacrifices and burnt-offerings. Jahweh, according to Jeremiah, gave no commands to the fathers of Israel concerning these; His commands were ethical only.[2] We have here a more explicit repetition of Hosea's text quoted by Christ: *I will have mercy and not sacrifice.* Hence it does not surprise us that before the end of his ministry Jeremiah proclaimed *a New Covenant* (the Deuteronomic being the old), in which there is no word of ritual or sacrifice, but man's communion with God, and God's forgiveness of man, depend on the inward knowledge, and acceptance, of God's ethical revelation. This is the Covenant which Christ said was sealed in His blood.[3]

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[1] Deut. iv. 19. [2] Jer. vii. 22. [3] Luke xxii. 20.

It is, however, in his experience of the relation of the individual to God and to the community, that this greatest of the prophets becomes likest to Christ. The experience came to Jeremiah from the earliest moments of his career; but it was developed by antipathy to the people's formal fulfilment of the Deuteronomic ideals of national religion; it was confirmed by the collapse of these with the death of Josiah; and it was slowly articulated in the gradual decay of the nation and in the cruelties which the lonely prophet suffered under Jehoiakim and Zedekiah. The community, which Isaiah had described as inviolable, upon its historical site of Zion and in its political form as the kingdom of the house of David, was about to be broken up. The individual was being left to his own resources: there was a call to each man to save himself. The monarchy, the nation, the ritual, the Temple, were certain of destruction: Jeremiah could promise to his disciples only their bare lives.[1] And to a man like Jeremiah, such leadings of Providence were enforced by a number of religious considerations. As almost none before him had felt, Jeremiah knew how God can single out the individual and deal with him apart from his family, his citizenship, or his priesthood: *Before I formed thee in the belly I knew thee, and before thou camest forth of the womb I consecrated*

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[1] Jer. xlv. 5; cf. xxi. 9; xxxviii. 2; xxxix. 18.

*thee.*[1] By temper the man was solitary, introspective, greatly concerned about himself. His nation, too, deserved nothing of him; they had betrayed his God, they refused to listen to his word, and they cast him off. What a conspiracy of temptation was here to break away from the community, to assert a purely individual religion, to save one's own soul out of so manifestly doomed a dispensation! Jeremiah tells us how he felt the strain. At one time he prayed for some far-off caravanserai of wayfaring men, where he could be separate from his own people and no longer responsible for their life.[2] At another, his countrymen put him in prison lest he should desert to the Babylonians;[3] and at another the Babylonians offered him a place among themselves.[4] But God kept Jeremiah to a more excellent way, and he had scarcely found his position before God as an individual, independent of every rite and relation, or realised his opportunities as an individual, when there descended upon him a sense of his oneness with his people far more stringent than ever prophet had felt it before — a sympathy with their sufferings which breaks out in the most pathetic cries in all literature; and a conscience of their sins, which astounds and perplexes him beyond the power of articulate expression. *Jahweh, thou hast beguiled me and*

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[1] Jer. i. 5.

[2] Jer. ix. 2.

[3] Jer. xxxvii. 13 ff.

[4] Jer. xl. 4 ff.

*I am beguiled: thou art stronger than I. Why is my pain perpetual and my wound incurable? Art thou altogether become to me as a liar, and as waters that fail?*[1] His perplexity is his personal experience of the sufferings of the righteous through the wrongdoing of the wicked. *Only let me put before Thee certain questions of justice: Why is the way of the wicked fortunate, and how are they happy who deal treacherously? Thou plantest them: they take root and flourish and bring forth fruit. Thou art familiar in their mouths, but very far from their reins. Yet Thou, O Jahweh, knowest me: Thou seest me and triest my heart towards Thyself.*[2] It is a darker, a more bewildered heart in Gethsemane: though it says *Thy will be done* in its own way, *Thou hast right, O Jahweh*,[3] it does not understand the meaning of its burden and its cross.

A later generation, however, awoke to the virtue of Jeremiah's pain. Whether the figure of the Suffering Servant in the fifty-third of Isaiah be intended by the writer as an individual (as it seems to me we ought to conclude),[4] or (in the opinion of most modern critics) as a personification of the righteous and suffering remnant of Israel, there is no doubt that the vision is partly inspired by the nation's appreciation of the meaning of Jeremiah's life. They had awakened to this through their own experience. God's doom had fallen on a generation not more guilty than their fathers; it had covered the righteous as well as the sinners. Innocent children had been born into it, and a whole generation had grown up in exile under a curse which they had not earned.

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[1] Jer. xx. 7; xv. 18.
[2] xii. 1–3.
[3] xii. 1.

[4] Both from the grammar and by the fact that Jeremiah's individual experience is reflected in it.

*Our fathers have sinned and are not,*
*And we have borne their iniquities.*[1]

It was out of this actual experience of the reality of vicarious suffering as part of life and of the providence of God, that the great evangelical truths of the fifty-third of Isaiah were developed. The Exile had brought Israel face to face with the heathen world, and while they received chastisement from their tyrants they were conscious of their religious superiority to these. In their despair before the world, there gradually awoke the sense of a capacity to serve it; there was aroused a new appreciation of an old call. Israel was Jahweh's Servant and Messenger to mankind. His exile was the punishment of his refusal of this mission.[2] But it was also a new opportunity for obedience; and in so far as those upon whom the exile had fallen were, as individuals, innocent, could it not be said that the pains of the Exile fulfilled some higher religious end than the punishment of Israel, and were themselves part of Israel's work for the world? Israel had been blind and deaf,[1] and therefore Jahweh had given him to the spoilers. But now *my Servant is wise:* he understands his mission and the meaning of his sufferings, and (so the pregnant phrase implies) shall succeed.[2] Thus in the meeting of the old memory of a call to the service of Jahweh, and the fresh experience of the sufferings of the righteous, there was born that conception of One sent from God, righteous and blameless; misunderstood by the world and deemed to be lying under God's displeasure; by whose sufferings sinful men are redeemed, and by whose stripes they are healed.

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[1] Lam. v. 7.

[2] Which thought is developed by the later Book of Jonah.

Side by side with these beliefs in the efficacy of vicarious suffering, which were derived by Israel from her experience of life, there grew up a reconstruction of the ritual and the priesthood, in which the ideas of atonement and cleansing for sin replaced to a large degree those more peaceful and joyous feelings of communion with God which govern the conception of sacrifice in Israel's earlier codes. The fifty-third of Isaiah speaks of the human Servant of Jahweh as bearing the sins of the people, efficaciously removing them, and so giving his life a guilt-offering for many. This guilt-offering was the

[1] Isaiah xlii. 19.

[2] Isaiah lii. 13.

central rite of the new system of ritual: in which sin was said to be borne and expiated by the death of beasts representative of those who offered them.

It has been argued by some[1] that there is no idea of substitution in the animal sacrifices of the Levitical Law, but that their offering is simply an act of penitence. The argument is far from conclusive, and its authors have to admit, both that the human conscience has elsewhere (though not universally) associated substitution with animal sacrifice, and that there are at least echoes of this in the Jewish system. Nevertheless, there is a truth underlying the opinion. The idea of vicarious suffering and substitution of the innocent for the guilty, whereby the guilty are redeemed from their sin, is to be traced not to those animal sacrifices of the Levitical ritual, but rather to the nobler source of human vicariousness and its virtue, as learned by Israel from their own experience, and idealised in the Suffering Servant of Jahweh, whose prototypes are Jeremiah and the righteous remnant. In such human instances we get the ethical truth of vicariousness: red with the blood of real life. In the animal sacrifices the expression of the idea is largely mechanical.

Unfortunately, both in Jewish and in Christian theology, it has been the sacrificial animals and not the human Servant, Law and not Prophecy, which have governed the conceptions of atonement for sin. Symbol and ritual were among ancient people the best vehicle for the tradition of ideas, and therefore we can understand why, till our Lord's time, the truths we are treating should find their favourite popular expression in the forms of animal sacrifice, and why Christ Himself should associate His supreme Self-Sacrifice with the Paschal Lamb. But even the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews, who dwells more than any other New Testament writer upon the Levitical antitypes of Christ, shows their insufficiency, and precedes his exposition of them by majestic emphasis on the humanity of Christ — as distinct from an official priesthood — and by illustration of this from those human aspects of vicarious service in the Old Testament which fill his opening chapters. This example, unfortunately for Christianity, has been misunderstood — not by the greatest theologians but by the smaller ones, and by generation after generation of popular preachers. It is because Christian divines have dwelt too much on the Old Testament system of sacrifices and too little upon the figures of Jeremiah, the suffering remnant and the Servant of the Lord: too much upon the animal types of the Cross and too little upon the human forerunners of Christ: that their explanations of the vicarious character of the passion and death of the Redeemer have so often been mechanical and repulsive. Certainly in our day, when animal sacrifices have so long ceased to speak to the imagination and conscience of men, it is the direst blunder a preacher may commit to dwell upon them except for the barest of exegetical purposes. If we are to get our fellows to believe in the redemptive virtue of Christ's Cross, it will be by proving to them that vicarious suffering and its ethical virtue are no arbitrary enactments of God, but natural to life and inevitable wherever sin and holiness, guilt and love, encounter and contend. 'Non est dolor nisi de amore amisso, quanto profundior erat amor tanto altius tangit dolor.'[1] And in this we shall succeed most readily by proving, as we can do from the history which we have been traversing, that the figure of a Sufferer, holy and undefiled, by whose stripes we are healed, by whose bearing of our iniquities we are justified, was desired and confidently expected by men, not because Heaven had arbitrarily proclaimed it, but out of their own experiences of life and death, the very elements of which provided them with their marvellous picture of Him.

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[1] *E.g.* Schultz, *Old Testament Theology*.

The Levitical system, however, was not wholly animal or mechanical. The head and centre of it was human, the *Great* or *High Priest* who first appears in Hebrew history with the Return from the Exile. In the visions of Zechariah,[1] he carries the guilt of the whole people before God and receives their pardon; in the Levitical Law he enters within the veil as their representative on the Day of Atonement.[2] At first of equal rank with the native governor of Israel,[3] the High Priest assumed gradually much of the civil and judicial power, till he became King as well as Priest, and thus besides gathering upon his person the virtue of the sacrificial system, represented also the political Messiah of the earlier prophets. It is unnecessary to follow in detail the influence of this Figure upon the theology of the New Testament and the constitution of the Christian Church. We shall see in a later Lecture, how a merely official and unhistorical interpretation of the double office was employed to defend the temporal government of the Popes.[4] How infinitely different is the human and ethical High Priesthood claimed for Jesus by the author of the Epistle to the Hebrews! Here there is nothing official, nothing of a secular sovereignty. Jesus, though the Son of God and natural head of mankind, enters upon His priesthood through the voluntary assumption of human nature and fellowship with all its suffering and temptation. The name of His great office is borrowed from

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[1] Hugo St. Victor, on Gen. vi. 6.

[1] Ch. iii.

[2] Levit. xvi.

[3] So in Haggai and Zechariah.

[4] See Lecture VII.

the Law; but its character and virtue are drawn from the prophet's picture of the suffering servant of the Lord.

But the Spirit of Christ in the Old Testament is not exhausted even in its greatest human figures; whether the Messiah of the earlier prophets, the Suffering Servant of the later, or the High Priest of the Levitical system. We must seek another line than these supply for the full prophecy of the Incarnation. Parallel to that prospect of the blessed future, which finds its goal in the appearance of a human Saviour now reigning over His people and now suffering with them and bearing their sins, there runs through all the Prophets another line of vision the end of which is the appearance of God Himself and Alone — either undertaking His people's deliverance from their enemies or reigning over them in visible majesty. The human Messiah, whom the earlier prophecies of Isaiah predict, disappears from the later and God is all in all.[1] In Jeremiah, Jahweh Himself is His people's *Righteousness*,[2] that is their full and manifest vindication in history. In the prophecy which most critics assign to some disciple of Isaiah *Jahweh will be for us in majesty. For Jahweh is our Judge, our Lawgiver, our King: He will save us.*[3] At each great crisis in Israel's history, the Eternal will appear, as for instance He is pictured in an exilic or post-exilic vision[1] treading the wine-press of battle, and the blood of His people's foes stains all His raiment. With such theophanies we may take the very numerous passages of the Old Testament which attribute to the Deity effort and passion of the most violent kind, describe Him in the similitude of a man of war, Israel's champion and protagonist, and do not even hesitate, as in one instance,[2] to picture Him as a woman in travail. All these anthropomorphisms, as they are called, are not to be interpreted as the mere effort of their writers' art to make the unseen vivid to the imagination of a rude people. We are to see in them the expression of what all the Prophets felt to be the essence of the Divine: the truth that God makes His people's salvation His own concern and effort, and accomplishes this not in power only but in pain and self-sacrifice. The sins and sorrows of men are not only set in the light of His countenance, but He bears them upon His heart.[3] His righteousness is not only regnant but militant. He *rises and comes down*, entering His people's war with their enemies on a level of struggle equal with themselves. His love is not only complacent but sympathetic, passionate, self-sacrificing: *in all their affliction*

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[1] See article 'Isaiah' in Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*, vol. ii.

[2] Jer. xxxiii. 16.

[3] Isa. xxxiii. 21, 22.

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[1] Isa. lxiii. 1–6.

[2] Isa. xlii. 13, 14.

[3] Isa. xl.–lxvi. uses the same verb סָבַל *to bear*, meaning *to bear with pain and difficulty* of God and of the Servant of God.

*He is afflicted.* He *pleads* for their loyalty; *reasons* with them in their sins; travails for their new birth and their growth in holiness; and is *longsuffering* with their sinfulness and their ignorance.[1]

It is very evident, therefore, that the essence of the truth about God's love and the perfection of that love in suffering, which Christ manifested and which is the glory of the Christian doctrine of the Incarnation, was already conceived and expressed by the Prophets.

The Spirit of Christ in the Old Testament is not confined to its human heroes and ideals: the length and the breadth, the height and the depth of it belong to the Old Testament's revelation of God Himself.

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[1] The substance of this passage will be found in an article by the present writer on 'The Messianic Prophecies' in a little volume of aids to Bible teachers, published by Messrs. Collins of Glasgow.

# LECTURE VI

## THE HOPE OF IMMORTALITY IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

We now turn to as fascinating, and at first sight as perplexing, an aspect of our subject as we have yet encountered: the attitude of Israel and their Scriptures to a future life.

Every one knows, at least in outline, what that attitude is. For the most part the writers of the Old Testament display towards the future of the individual beyond the grave a steady indifference; which is the more striking that it persists among lavish and brilliant hopes for the earthly future of the nation. The references to a personal immortality in the presence of God are exceptional. In the historical Books they are limited to two heroes of the nation; in the prophets they do not occur; in the Psalms and the Book of Job they consist of a few cries of confidence that the believer in God can never be separated from Him. Otherwise, the life beyond the grave is pictured as a cheerless, dusty, underground reflection of the mere surface of human existence, but without God or hope; from the ultimate certainty of which the believer seeks a respite by prayers for a long earthly life, and the fulness of God's favour so long as this lasts.

Such is the impression which the Old Testament makes upon those who search it for a gospel of immortality. It is our first duty to discover, by an examination of the details, whether this impression is a just one. If we prove it so, we have next to inquire what are the historical reasons for so singular an attitude towards the life to come. And finally we must determine the practical value of Israel's faith in this matter to the preacher of to-day.

## I. *The Old Testament Data.*

In the historical portions of the Pentateuch — which it is not necessary to separate into their various strata, for towards this subject their attitude is remarkably alike — death is as busy as elsewhere in the world, and men are as busy caring for their dead. When Sarah dies Abraham buys a sepulchre of the sons of Heth, and in time is himself buried there with Isaac his son. Jacob loses Rachel by the way, and by the way lays her to rest *as thou comest to Ephrath.* His own body is embalmed in Egypt and buried in Macpelah. Joseph's body is embalmed and carried by Israel all over the wilderness that it too may lie in the Promised Land. Aaron and Moses come to the end of their long years and are laid, the one in a known, the other in an unknown, sepulchre. These are the great personalities, yet neither for all their greatness do they project themselves beyond death, nor for all their closeness here to God do they crave from Him another life, nor in spite of the affection and reverence which surround them to the last, and the scrupulous care which is taken for their proper burial, is there any hope expressed of their continued existence. Abraham, when God promises to be his great reward, is anxious only for an heir of his own body;[1] and when his wife dies is busy only to procure her a grave in the soil promised to his descendants.[2] A living seed and a land for them to dwell in — that is all that Abraham's story contains of gospel for the future. Similarly, the last words imputed to Jacob are fraught with hope only for the tribes which have sprung from him, and for their settlement in Canaan: *Lo, I am dying, but God will be with you and bring you back to the land of your fathers.*[3] For himself there is the prospect of Sheol; he is eager that he be not brought down there in grief. The inference is that the state in which a man enters Sheol is his state for evermore.[1] For Joseph the last hope is a grave with his people in Canaan,[2] and for Moses a prospect of Canaan on the eve of the nation's occupation.[3] Even though God Himself prepares a sepulchre for the body of the friend who spake with Him face to face,[4] nothing is said of a future for Moses with God. All men, small and great, loved or hated, come under the curse upon their first parents: *dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return.*[5] There is but one exception, the mysterious story of Enoch,[6] which, however, describes not life after death, but a translation without death to the presence of God.[7]

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[1] Gen. xv. 1 ff.

[2] Gen. xxiii.; see especially verse 8: *to bury my dead out of my sight.*

[3] Gen. xlviii. 21; cf. xlix.

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[1] Gen. xxxvii. 35; xlii. 38; xliv. 31.

[2] Gen. l. 24–26.

[3] Deut. xxxii. 52.

[4] Ex. xxxiii. 11.

[5] Gen. iii. 19.

[6] Gen. v. 23 f.

[7] I have said above that it is not necessary in this review of the historical portions of the Pentateuch to distinguish between the strata from different periods, for the testimony of all is alike. Here, however, are the exact references. It is the Jahwist and Elohist who give us the confinement of Abraham's hopes to descendants from his own body (Gen. xv. 1 ff.); the death of Rachel (xxxv. 19); Jacob's dread of Sheol (xxxvii. 35, xlii. 38, xliv. 31), and his hopes for his descendants (xlviii. 21; cf. xlix.); the burial of Jacob (l. 1 ff.), and Joseph's last charge (l. 24); the death of Moses: *the time draws near that thou must die* (Deut. xxxi. 14): *thou shalt sleep with thy fathers* (ver. 16): *this is the land, to thy seed will I give it, but thou shalt not pass over thither. So Moses died* (xxxiv. 4, 5); Joshua's death and Joseph's burial (Josh. xxiv. 29 f.).

The Deuteronomists add few details relevant to our subject: Moses must not enter Canaan (Deut. iii. 23 ff., iv. 22); his death and burial (xxxiv. 5 f.) (it is doubtful whether Jahweh is described as Himself burying his servant: see Dillmann and Driver on the passage). The Priestly Writers give us the story of Enoch (Gen. v. 23, 24); of Macpelah (xxiii.); the death of Abraham (xxv. 7 f.); of Ishmael (ver. 17); of Isaac (xxxv. 29); of Jacob (xlix. 33); his

So, too, in the historical books which follow the Hexateuch. Soldiers on the battlefield, kings in the midtime of their career, the innocent child, the only son of his mother, the friend whose love was wonderful passing the love of women, the righteous man, the faithful prophet, the martyr — they are mourned and bewept, but never a word of hope is spoken regarding them. As in the Pentateuch, there are traces of a popular belief in an underground abode of the dead, where these preserve the characters they bore in life and whence they may be summoned to speak to the living. But that world is outside of religion; the traffickers with it are wizards and necromancers, whom the servants of Jahweh seek to drive from the land.[1] There is again as in the Pentateuch, a single hero, who escapes this subterranean fate by escaping death, and is translated to Heaven:[2] but Elijah in his fiery chariot is no revelation of a future with God for the common man. Some women receive their dead raised to life again. There are stories of prophets who bring back the breath to the bodies

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burial (l. 12, 13). Nadab and Abihu die before Jahweh (Lev. x. 2); death of Aaron on the top of the mountain (Num. xx. 22 ff.); death of Moses (Deut. xxxii. 48 ff.) (with the reason why Moses died in Moab before the entry into Canaan), xxxiv. 1*b*, 2, 7*a*, 8. It is the Priestly Writer who uses the phrases *gathered to his people* (Gen. xxv. 7 f. 17, xxxv. 29, xlix. 33); *to the men of his people* (Num. xx. 24); *to thy people* (Deut. xxxii. 50).

[1] 1 Sam. xxviii. 7 ff.

[2] 2 Kings ii. 11.

of those who have expired.[1] But even the faith that Jahweh's love and omnipotence can work such miracles provokes no single expression of hope that He will redeem the dead to eternal life in His presence.

The darkness is nowhere more impressive than over the Dirge of David upon Saul. The verses of this noble elegy throb with the joy of life: the flash of the sword, the glint of gold, the sheen of scarlet, and the beauty and strength of men. They praise the services of the dead to the country and nation. They are inspired, as we have seen,[2] with the feeling for greatness and the spirit of generous forgiveness. But none of these light one spark of the life to come. The poetry, the reverence, the love of the elegy are perfect; but it breathes no hope. We recognise, of course, that the soul has her hours sacred to grief; when even God in His great patience stands aside and leaves the broken heart alone with its dead. Yet this can hardly be the explanation of the absence from David's song of the name of God and of every hint of another life; for nowhere else in all the story that surrounds the song do we find any promise, or even instinct, of immortality for man. When Abigail says to David: *May the life of my lord be bound up in the bundle of life with Jahweh God*, it is of this life she is talking, for she has just said, *Should a man rise up to hunt thee and seek thy life*, and she immediately adds, *but the lives of thine enemies may He sling them out as from the middle of a sling.*[1] Life was here, for Jahweh was here. When men died they were *gathered to their fathers.*[2] It is a sweet phrase; but it had no religious hope till Christ put this into it.[3] Sheol was the abode of the dead, not of God, and as in the Pentateuch, so in these historical books, men went down into Sheol with such sorrow or blood, as fell upon the end of their lives, irremovable from them.[4]

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[1] 1 Kings xvii. 17 ff.; 2 Kings iv. 32 ff.

[2] Above, pp. 155 ff.

Before we pass from the historical books, one bit of evidence for belief in the continued existence of the dead must be noted. It has been thought by critics that Scripture contains proofs of the existence, in the earlier history of Israel, of the worship of the dead. Both in the Elohist's story of Jacob, and in the life of David, mention is made of certain Terāphim or images of gods, and these are elsewhere described in connection with oracles.[5] They were probably family gods;[6] the inference that they were the ancestors of the family is not unnatural, and is supported by traces of a habit of sacrificing to the dead which appear in mourning customs forbidden to Israel by the later law as alien to the religion of Jahweh.[1] The evidence is not conclusive, though sufficient for more than probability.[2] But in any case it points to a popular belief in the continued existence of souls after death. These were called by the later literature *Rephā'im*, probably 'the flaccid ones,' but earlier names for them, when they spoke through a necromancer, are *'ōbhôth;*[1] and *yiddĕōnîm*, perhaps 'knowing ones,'[2] and are proofs of a belief in their knowledge of, and their influence upon, human life.[3] Still it is to be noted that they are not represented in any association with the Deity, and that the religion of Jahweh from a very early time regarded traffic with the dead as incompatible with loyalty to Jahweh Himself.

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[1] 1 Sam. xxv. 29.

[2] And, as in David's case, to the child that preceded him (2 Sam. xii. 23).

[3] Cf. Ps. xlix. 2 with Matt. xxii. 32; Mark xii. 27; Luke xx. 38.

[4] Gen. xxxvii. 35, xlii. 38; 2 Sam. xii. 23.

[5] Jud. xvii. 5, xviii. 14; Hos. iii. 4: cf. Zech. x. 2; Ezek. xxi. 21.

[6] Cf. Laban's statement (Gen. xxxi. 30), and Micah's (Jud. xviii. 24).

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[1] Deut. xiv. 1; xxvi. 14; Lev. xxi. 5.

[2] See Stade, *Gesch. des Volkes Isr.*, i. 467; Schwally, *Leben nach dem Tode*, 35 ff. in support of the proof of an ancestor cult. For reasonable doubts of it cf. Davidson, art. 'God,' Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*, ii. 200 f.; and for a full argument against it, Frey, *Tod, Seelenglaube und Seelenkult im Alten Israel*, 1898. It seems to me, in spite of what Professors Davidson and Frey adduce, that whether the teraphim were understood to be the images of ancestors or not, the practice of the worship of ancestors in Israel is proved by the laws in Deut. xiv. 1 and xxvi. 14, taken along with the fact that sacrifices to the dead survived in historical times in other ancient religions, and also among the Semites: cf. Robertson Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 217. The shade of Samuel is called a god (1 Sam. xxviii. 13). The same preposition is used in Deuteronomy between such sacrifices and the dead, as between the legal sacrifices and Jahweh. Those are *to the dead*; these are *to Jahweh*. When among the Adwân in Moab in 1891, I questioned them concerning their sacrifices. It was hard for an ear unaccustomed to the Bedawee pronunciation to catch many details. But this was clear. They distinguished certain spring sacrifices, which they make within their camps as minshan el-mawât 'for the sake of the dead,' from those in Mecca at the Great Bairam, which they described as minshan Allah, 'for the sake of God.'—The whole question has been fully argued by Charles, *A Critical History of the Doctrine of the Future Life*, 1899, pp. 20 ff. While I cannot agree with all his inferences from the texts he cites (*e.g.* Ex. xxi. 2–6; 1 Sam. xxviii. 13, 16) his argument as a whole appears to me to be successful for the existence of ancestor-worship in Israel.—Other instances of sacrifices to the dead, in Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, i. 241, 450.

When we pass to the prophets we find no relief from the prevailing silence as to Jahweh's relation to the dead. The prophets have sovereign beliefs in God's faithfulness and omnipotence, and sovereign hopes for the future of Israel upon earth; but one and all ignore the fate of the individual man. Some of them have left us the stories of their personal origins, they have emphasised their individual relations to the Deity; but not one has betrayed his feelings about his death or bequeathed any hope which strengthened him in face of it. The great passages on resurrection and the Divine conquest of death which we read in Hosea[1] and in Ezekiel,[2] describe the revival of the nation from disaster and exile. In one very late prophecy[3] there is a cry that the national recovery from exile shall not be enough; those, who have died before it comes, must rise from their graves to share it. But obviously this is not the hope of a life with God beyond the grave. Another cry,[4] which rises with this, is of confidence that God will abolish death. But that confidence sinks again, and the brightest picture of the subject which later prophets leave us is of this life: a Jerusalem from which premature and violent death has been banished, and the city is full of men and women who have reached a quiet old age.[5]

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[1] According to 1 Sam. xxviii. 7, the necromancer was called the possessor of an *'ôbh:* according to Lev. xx. 27 the 'obh was *in* the necromancer.

[2] In Lev. xx. 27 parallel to 'ôbh and *in* the man or woman who mediated between the spirit and the inquirer. Cf. 1 Sam. xxviii. 3, 9.

[3] Dr. A. B. Davidson thinks that the name Rephaim 'and the fact that the 'obs twittered and muttered and spoke low out of the ground (Isa. viii. 19, xxix. 4) indicate that they were regarded as anything but powerful "gods"' (Hastings's *Bible Dictionary*, ii. 201). Still they had superhuman knowledge; and at least the whole prevalence of this necromancy proves a popular belief in the real existence of the dead.

Turning now to the Psalms, we must put aside, as we have done in the case of the Prophets, all expressions of immortality which are manifest metaphors of the revival of the nation, and merely affirm its reconstruction and perpetuity upon earth. After these have been disposed of, there remain very few Psalms which illuminate the destiny of the individual beyond the grave; nor is any of them a reasoned confidence in a future for him with God. At the best they are but cries flung out in revolt from the thought of a future without Him, or in passionate confidence that in death He cannot desert the soul He has favoured with His grace. Some critics have denied an individual reference to the Sixteenth Psalm, and have interpreted its verses of Israel as a whole; and this is not an impossible interpretation. Yet it seems to me that the ninth and tenth verses are most naturally understood of the individual, or at least of his generation; it was the living generation and not the nation, actual or ideal, who feared Sheol.[1] And the individual character of the confidence of the Seventy-third Psalm is still more clear:

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[1] Hos. vi. 1 f., xiii. 14.

[2] Ezek. xxxvii.

[3] Isaiah xxvi. 19.

[4] xxv. 8.

[5] Zech. viii. 4.

*Nevertheless I am continually with Thee;*
*Thou hast holden me with Thy right hand*
*Thou shalt guide me with Thy counsel,*
*And afterward receive me to glory.*
*Whom have I in heaven but Thee?*
*And there is none upon earth I desire besides Thee.*
*My flesh and my heart fail;*
*But God is the strength of my heart,*
*And my portion for ever.*[2]

Yet such faith did not always succeed in breaking away from the prospect of that fate for individuals which we have already seen accepted by the earlier books, and which is now described with more explicitness. In Psalms, if not of the individual yet of the living generation of Jahweh's people, before whom death looms inevitable, there are cries that the suppliants may be allowed to continue the praise of God in the land of the living:

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[1] The reference of the Psalm to individuals is further confirmed if we read *thy pious ones* (or *leal* or *loving ones*) as some codd. do instead of the singular.

[2] Ps. lxxiii. 23–26.

*For in death there is no remembrance of Thee:*
*In the grave who shall give Thee thanks?*
*The dead praise not Jahweh,*
*Neither any that go down into silence.*[1]

Another Psalmist describes himself, or his own generation, as the temporary guest of God, who must soon depart from His house and go away:

*Hear my prayer, O Jahweh,*
*And give ear unto my cry;*
*Hold not Thy peace at my tears:*
*For I am but a guest with Thee,*
*And a sojourner, as all my fathers were.*
*O spare me, that I may recover brightness,*
*Before I go hence, and be no more.*[2]

This is not a prayer for immortality, but for a little more patience from God, a little more warming of the hands at the fire of this life before the door opens and the guest is dismissed into the night. From such depression caused by the shortness of life other Psalms recover hope;

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[1] Ps. vi. 5, cxv. 17; cf. xxx. 9, lxxxviii. 11.

[2] Ps. xxxix. 12 f.

but they do not recover by taking hold of the hope of eternity. The Ninetieth, for instance, which of all others most pathetically illustrates the transitoriness of man's existence upon earth, gives him no expectation of another, but asks for gladness through the days that remain, some little recompense for the evil of the past, some reflection of God's beauty, and the establishment of the work of His servants' hands. Even Job, when every other door of righteousness is closed to him, bursts for only a few moments into the possibility of another life, of the vision of God and the experience of His justice beyond the grave;[1] but then, as if the thought were strange and too daring, he falls back from it upon other lines of search, and the Book closes with the manifestation of God's power on this earth, and the recovery of His servant to an earthly prosperity. The rest of the literature gives us no relief. The wisdom of the Book of Proverbs is for this life alone; and Ecclesiastes, which ends with a funeral, finds the only profit man can have in the enjoyment, under the fear of God, of the fleeting opportunities of life while they last; for they are soon gone, and all things, youth and love, knowledge and effort, are *vanity* — that is, not worthless while they last, but lasting so little — a breath, a pulse which soon expires. In the very late Book of Daniel,[2] we find, however, one explicit prediction of the resurrection of *many of them who sleep in the dust of the earth, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt, and they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.*[1] This prediction stands in very definite contrast to all that we have elsewhere found. We may recognise in it a more confident development of the faith, which has already broken forth in some Psalms, of the impossibility that God should relinquish to the grave those who have trusted in Him. But we must remember that there had come in, between them and its particular notes of resurrection and judgement, certain popular views and imaginations of the future beyond the grave which do not receive any other expression in the Old Testament.

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[1] Job xix. 25 ff.

[2] *Circa* 165 B. C.

These, then, are the essential lines in the attitude of the Old Testament writers to the life beyond the grave. They reveal the existence of a popular belief in a state after death, which the earlier religion, apparently taking it for granted, left alone as outside its interests; but which the later faced and fought, and to some extent rose above, in the strength of faith in the God of Israel. Our next duty is to inquire what were the historical reasons for this popular belief in the state of the dead, as well as for the various phases of the attitude which the religion of Israel assumed towards it. I believe that, instead of being chilled by the whole subject as so many are, a preacher will find it, when historically explained, one of the most fruitful sources of material and inspiration which the Old Testament has to offer him.

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[1] Dan. xii. 2, 3.

## II. *The Historical Explanation.*

We are all probably acquainted with the curious reason which used to be offered for the silence of the earlier Hebrew writings with regard to another life. By Warburton, in his *Divine Legation of Moses*,[1] it was imputed to a design on the part of the great lawgiver to withdraw the mind of his people from the overpowering effect of the elaborate visions of the other world which they had encountered on the monuments of Egypt. No nation has developed 'other-worldliness' more than have the builders of the Pyramids and vast mausoleums of Memphis, Abydos and Thebes. According to Warburton, Moses intended to purge the mind of Israel of all the morbid influences of this 'other-worldliness,' and so he carefully excluded from his legislation every hint of the life to come. The explanation is ingenious, but it is artificial. It is also inadequate in light of the critical reconstruction of the history. And there is another and more natural reason for the phenomenon which it seeks to explain.

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[1] 1738–1741.

We find this in one of the characteristics of the race to which Israel belonged. The Semites, or, to be accurate, those nomadic Semites with whom Israel was more closely connected, have never been conspicuous for their interest in, or their imagination of, a future life. The Arabs, whom early Israel so largely resembled,[1] remember their dead; and as they pass their graves will call upon them by name and pour libations of water on the sandy mounds;[2] as we have seen,[3] they also sacrifice to them. Yet this is all. They have not, and never seem to have had, either dogma of another life, or any vision of such, unless their beliefs in subterranean *jins* or spirits spring from their imagination of the dead in the grave. In Arabic poetry before Mohammed's time the few sparks of the hope of immortality are, according to Wellhausen, due to Jewish or Christian influence.[4] When Mohammed himself, borrowing from the same sources, preached the resurrection, his countrymen mocked it as incredible; and even now, after twelve centuries of the prevalence of his religion in the Arabian Peninsula, the Arabs, by the witness of several travellers,[1] have not formed any clear notion of a future world.

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[1] See above, p. 127.

[2] Wellhausen, *Reste arab. Heidentumes*, p. 161; Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, i. p. 241, 448. I have heard my Bedawee guides in Moab and south of Engedi hail by name the occupants of untitled graves which we passed on our way: 'Ya Ahmed!' 'Ya Dhiâb.' Conder (*Heth and Moab*, new ed. p. 318) states that the Adwan remember nine generations of ancestors.

[3] P. 184, note 2.

[4] *Reste arab. Heidentumes*, p. 164.

The reasons for all this are not far to seek. One of them may be the notorious incapacity of the Semite, when uninfluenced by foreign civilisations, for sustained speculation. Others are undoubtedly found in the migratory habits of the desert life. The shifting camps, the easily obliterated graves, the want of written monuments and records, impress the imagination rather with the transiency than with the permanence of man.[2] It takes the long occupation of one site, the building of cities, the raising of monuments, the capacity for history, to sustain the memory of the dead and to hand on the tradition of another life. In the poetry of the Bible, the tent, easily folded and carried away, is the type of man's transient life; but eternity is figured in the city which hath foundations. Even Job's daring hope of his vindication in a life to come is uttered along with the passionate cry for the inscription of his cause on some monument or book. *O that my words were now written! O that they were recorded in a book: that they were graven with an iron pen and lead in the rock for ever!*[3]

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[1] *E.g.* Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, i. pp. 240 f., 445 f.

[2] 'In the border Semitic countries is a long superstition of the grave; here (*i.e.* at Hayil in Central Arabia) is but the simple nomad guise, without other last loving care or adornment.'—Doughty, *Arabia Deserta*, i. p. 618.

[3] xix. 23 f.

When Semites settled down and built themselves cities, and in consequence sepulchres,[1] they either developed or, as is probable in Babylonia, partly borrowed from the race which preceded them, a certain imagination of life in the grave. The pictures of man's future home which are characteristic of Babylonian literature are conceived in the likeness of one of the caves or underground structures in which the dead were laid for burial.

*The house of darkness . . .*
*The house men enter, but cannot depart from.*
*The road men go but cannot return.*
*The house from whose dwellers the light is withdrawn.*
*The place where dust is their food, their nourishment clay.*
*The light they behold not; in darkness they dwell.*
*They are clothed like birds, all fluttering wings.*
*On the door and the gateposts the dust lieth deep.*[2]

This was the universal resort of men and their everlasting home. The exceptions to the hopeless, passionless fate which it contains are few. So far as Babylonian records have been deciphered, they amount to one or two — as many as Enoch and Elijah in the early history of Israel — who were taken to the abode of the gods and enjoyed immortal life in their presence.[1] For the common man the underworld is inevitable, with its dust, its joyless existence, its silence broken only by the peeping and chirping of ghosts — a conception derived, as all who have explored Eastern sepulchres must admit, from the noises of the bats which throng the sepulchres. The Babylonians called the realm of the dead Aralû; it lay beneath a great mountain of the same name. Some scholars assert that it was also known to the Babylonians as Sheol;[2] others, however, doubt this.[3] Aralû had divine guardians, but lay outside the jurisdiction of the gods of the upper world.[4] It was entered only through the gates of the grave.[5]

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[1] See p. 193, note 2.

[2] From the Assyrian Descent of Ishtar to Hades (German trans. by Jeremias, *Die Bab. Assyr. Vorstellungen vom Leben nach dem Tode*, p. 11; Eng. in *Records of the Past*, i. 145.

Whether the Hebrews borrowed their conception of Sheol from that of the Babylonians, or whether both came from a common source, is uncertain. The latter is the more probable theory.[6] It is, as we have seen, in the later writings that the Hebrew conception of Sheol becomes most developed; and though original to early Israel, the conception may have been elaborated through Israel's Babylonian connections in the seventh and subsequent centuries. In the Book of Job, Sheol is behind *bars* where men *rest in the dust*, and *spread their couch in the darkness.*[1]

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[1] Jastrow, *Religion of Babylonia, etc.* 576 f.

[2] Jastrow, *op. cit.* pp. 558 ff.; *American Journal of Semitic Languages*, xiv.; Jeremias, *op. cit.* p. 109.

[3] Jensen, *Kosmologie der Babylonier*, pp. 22 ff., and Zimmern, quoted by Charles, *op. cit.* p. 34, n. 2.

[4] Jastrow, p. 582.

[5] *Ibid.* p. 586.

[6] There are slight differences in the two conceptions. The confirmation of the evidence that the name Sheol occurs in Babylonian would, however, strongly support the first theory.

*There the wicked cease from troubling;*
*And there the weary be at rest.*
*The prisoners are at ease together,*
*They hear not the voice of the driver,*
*The small and the great are there;*
*And the slave is free from his master.*[2]

When, then, the nomad Semite became civilised, this is all that his inscribed sepulchres and monuments, keeping the dead in remembrance, brought to him. Of immortality in the true sense of the word — with God and in full enjoyment of life — the Hebrew had no inherent conception. Even nature appears to have made to him no such suggestions of resurrection as in Babylonia inspired hope for a heroic individual or two,[3] but were not extended to the common man.

The want of hope among the Semites must not, however, be altogether charged upon their physical environment: the main cause was the conception of the individual which prevailed in Semitic religion. To the ancient Semite, as we saw in last Lecture, God did not deal with the individual, but with the tribe as a whole. It was the tribal existence which the divine honour was obliged to maintain: so long as that was preserved on earth, the fate of the individual, after he fulfilled his length of days, mattered little. In Old Testament language, the leaves or the branches might perish, if only the stock and stump remained. In another sense than that in which Christ used the words, the gods of the ancient Semites were not the gods of the dead, but of the living. The necessities of a life of almost constant warfare confirmed the tribesmen in these beliefs, and the dead were forgotten in the stress of defending the living. There was no time to brood on the past, and even in the sacred duty of blood-revenge, which otherwise might have been supposed to preserve the memory of the fallen, the responsibility was mainly felt to the tribe whose blood had been spilt, and it crowded out the memory of the individuals for whom the vengeance was piously performed.

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[1] xvii. 12–16.
[2] iii. 17–19.
[3] Epic of Ishtar; see Jeremias, *op. cit.* p. 119, n. 2.

The same ideas prevailed in early Israel. Up to Jeremiah's time the religious unit was almost exclusively the nation, and the religious problem — not as in Christianity the salvation of the individual — was the perpetuation upon earth of a people of Jahweh, to serve, praise and bear witness for Him. You remember how we saw that the great ideas of redemption and providence came into the theology of Israel by the redemption of the nation from Egyptian servitude, and by the guidance of the nation through the wilderness. The idea that God cared for and dealt directly with individuals could not, of course, be utterly absent, and we see it illustrated in a great many of the early narratives of Israel.[1] But it is significant that some even of those apparent individuals are, as we learned, personifications of tribes and clans; and at least even the most personal of them all are represented as departing this life with hopes, not for themselves, but for the future of their families. It is not otherwise when we come to the prophets. In spite of their own individual experiences of religion, in spite of Hosea's sense of love for the outcast wife, and Isaiah's assurance of his own cleansing and call by God, the interest of the prophets in the fate of the nation as a whole is too overwhelming to allow them to develop the elements of their consciousness of a personal relation to the Deity. As Isaiah puts it, the great problem of religion, the one end upon which he and his fellows see concentrated the omnipotence and righteousness of Jahweh, is the preservation of a Remnant of Israel; for if Israel utterly perish, none will be left on earth to represent Jahweh, and the knowledge of the true God must disappear. To save and to purify the Remnant is the whole interest and warfare of religion, to which not only must all others be postponed, but beside the crisis and the glory of which they lose their reality. The future of the nation on which the early prophets dwell with such power and beauty is — till we reach the faint beginnings of apocalypse in Zephaniah — reached along the lines of history and upon the surface of this earth. The early prophets do not think of another world, but of this one, as the scene of Israel's ceaseless life with Jahweh — this world better indeed, freed from war, famine, storm, and lust, but still *this* world — and they do not always promise that the death of individuals shall be absent from it. With such national hopes drawing them on, the prophets do not stop to think — at least, they do not stop to speak — of what becomes of individual Israelites. If one generation fall, God will raise another to take its place.

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[1] Above, pp. 106 f.

The indifference of the prophet to the individual is, however, not the most interesting thing: from the Psalms we learn that the individual himself appears to have acquiesced in it. Between his feet and the golden future of his people there lay his own grave: the black, inevitable door to Sheol. Jahweh would continue to guide the nation, but at that point Jahweh ceased to guide him. He fell to the dead, and Jahweh and Israel left him behind. Thus, while to us death means to go to God, to the Israelite death was to leave God. God was with Israel and in Israel: but with the dead Jahweh had as little to do as had the Babylonian gods of the upper world.

We have already seen some proofs that even the pious adherent of Jahweh accepted this view,[1] and from the Psalms they might be multiplied. Their date is quite uncertain; if, as is probable, they are late, their testimony is all the more remarkable. They prove that at the very heart of Israel's religion there were pious men who cried out against death as the dissolution of their communion with Jahweh, but who regarded that dissolution as the inevitable end and prayed only for a reprieve till their years should be full:

*Sheol cannot praise Thee.*
*Death cannot celebrate Thee.*
*They that are gone down unto the pit cannot*
*hope for Thy truth.*[2]
*I am a guest with Thee,*
*And a sojourner as all my fathers were.*
*O spare me, that I may recover brightness,*
*Before I go hence, and be no more.*[3]

But to these acceptances of the popular belief, which are acceptances of despair, and which we can hardly read without a shudder, individuals (or generations) in Israel sometimes added others that are full of inspiration to ourselves. The Ninetieth Psalm is, even in the Old Testament, the most pathetic description of the drift of the generations of men into darkness. *Jahweh, Israel's dwelling-place in all generations*, alone is eternal.

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[1] See above, p. 88.

[2] Hezekiah's Psalm; Isa. xxxviii. 18.

[3] Ps. xxxix. 12, 13.

*Thou turnest man into crumbling,*
*And sayest: Return, ye children of men.*
*Thou carriest them off as with a flood.*
*They become like a dream.*
*In the morning they are like grass which*
*groweth up;*
*In the morning it flourisheth and groweth up,*
*In the evening it is cut down and withereth.*
*For we are consumed by Thine anger,*
*And by Thy wrath are we troubled.*

The reason for this death is the same as that to which the Jahwist assigns it in his story of the origins of man.

*Thou hast set our iniquities before Thee,*
*Our secret sins in the light of Thy countenance.*
*Who knoweth the power of Thine anger,*
*Or Thy wrath as befitteth the fear of Thee?*

Against the universal fate which men expect, thus explained and confirmed as it is by the stern ethical principles of Jahweh's religion, the Psalmist fortifies himself and his generation, not by the hope of a life to come, not by a gospel which explicitly gets rid of death as well as sin; but by his faith that Jahweh is the home of all the *living* generations of His people: by beseeching Him to turn their hearts to the value of the days which they are still to have with Him; by a prayer that what remains of these days for himself and his contemporaries may be filled with gladness, according to the days wherein they have been afflicted; and that whatsoever their hands have found to do may be confirmed by Him.

What a noble resolution to turn from the contemplation of death to work and worship! To us it is inexpressibly precious as the proof that Israel's faith, before any hope of a future life broke upon it, had by its native ethical principles and experience of God, conquered the paralysing influences of that intellectual conception of death, which it had inherited as a part of the Semitic race.

The time came, however, when, as we have seen, even so bright and so ethical a faith as that of the Ninetieth Psalm was insufficient, and the individual, who found no victory and no gladness in this life, dared to hope for something beyond. When exactly such a hope emerged we cannot determine; but our ignorance of the date is of little moment beside the fact that we know how the change was caused. As we saw in last Lecture,[1] there began to brighten, about the end of the seventh century, the vision of the religious worth of the individual. The reasons for this were many and complex. The nation was breaking up, and the individual was being bidden to think of himself. New ethical convictions of personal responsibility were born; both Jeremiah and Ezekiel give expression to them. But more than all there was the spiritual originality, the independent experience, the unique relation to God, of Jeremiah himself. I cannot but think that his example did more than anything else to develop in Israel the consciousness of the spiritual duties and rights of the individual. At least it must have contributed powerful aid to the other tendencies I have mentioned; and we find it expressed in Jeremiah's conception of the New Covenant. In the time of the Exile, when the political and religious institutions of Israel disappeared, the greater stress was laid upon personal qualities as the means and highest possibilities of religion: *Thus saith the High and Lofty One who inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy. I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and a humble spirit to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones.*[2] The precious fruit of so much sorrow was not lost when the nation and its ritual were restored.

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[1] Pp. 165 ff.

[2] Isa. lvii. 15.

It is the witness of all historians of the post-exilic period, that within the strong nationalism and legalism of the Jews there flourished the most beautiful personal piety; souls feeling, as Jeremiah felt it, their individual relation to God.

It would appear to be from such convictions of the individual's relation to God that the few hopes of immortality spring which emerge in the Old Testament. They start from a revolt of the individual believer in God either against the horrible conditions of Sheol, the expectation of which he had intellectually inherited; or against the injustice, which God's providence of this life does not redress, and so forces the conscience to appeal to His judgement hereafter. We have seen how, even when he had no hope, the pious Israelite shrank from the future which gaped for him in Sheol. It was the utter antithesis of his experience here: it was silence, it was powerlessness, it was devoid of the presence of God. But God loved him, and had made him His own: and God was omnipotent and eternal. God could not have been to the pious what He had been, and made them what they were only to abandon them in death.

*I have set Jahweh always before me.*
*Because He is at my right hand I shall not be*
*moved,*
*Therefore my heart is glad,*

*And my . . .*[1] *rejoiceth.*
*Even my flesh dwelleth in safety,*
*For Thou wilt not abandon my life to Sheol,*
*Neither wilt thou suffer thy pious ones to see the pit.*
*Thou wilt make me to know the path of life:*
*In Thy presence is fulness of joy,*
*At Thy right hand are pleasures evermore.*[2]

The other two instances of hope for the individual after death spring from more purely ethical reasons. The writer of the Seventy-third Psalm found his faith going when he observed the prosperity of the wicked.

*As for me, my feet were almost gone,*
*My steps had well nigh slipped.*[3]

He heard how many of God's people, led away by the security and arrogance of sinners, doubted if God knew, and felt as if their own righteousness were in vain.[4] From such a confession the Psalmist himself had been saved by fears of disloyalty to the generation of God's children.

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[1] The meaning is uncertain.

[2] Ps. xvi. 8–11. As remarked above, this Psalm cannot be fairly interpreted of the revival of the earthly Israel from disaster and exile. It is death, Sheol, the grave, which the writer fears either for himself or for the living generation of Israel. Of course, it is possible to read the words of the hope by which he rises superior to death, as if they merely meant a deliverance for a time from impending death. But it is more natural to take them as the assurance of immortality in spite of death. And at least they contain the feelings by which such a survival of actual death became sure to individual Israelites.

[3] Verse 3.

[4] Verses 4–14.

But the pressure of his doubts was too great for him until he *entered into the mysteries of God and considered the latter end of the wicked.*[1] Probably by *the mysteries*, literally, *the holy things, of God*,[2] he means the ultimate deeds of God in the full character of His holiness. The certain end of the wicked is destruction, and the conscience of the Psalmist tells him he should have known this, instead of being unreasonably embittered.[3] For himself, here and afterwards, in life as in death, the presence, the counsel, the power of God are sure. *Flesh and heart may fail: God is the strength of my heart and my portion for ever.* The Psalmist does not tell us how he shall rise, or that he shall rise at all. But the promises of all future doctrines of immortality and resurrection are here — in the faithfulness and power of the Deity, to whom His follower has committed himself. That it is the next life, to which he looks for the action of these divine attributes, is clear from the despair of his vision of this one, no less than from the terms in which his new hope is expressed.

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[1] Verse 17.

[2] מִקְדְּשֵׁי־אֵל : some take the expression to imply esoteric doctrines of life and judgement after death which were coming into expression in Israel at the time the Psalm was written. But the above seems, from the parallelism of the verse and its context, to be the more natural rendering.

[3] Verses 18–22.

In the case of Job the hope of a personal life after death[1] is the demand of the man's conscience. He is dying unvindicated: *here* God will not appear to him nor examine his plea. Therefore he *knows* he shall see God after death. The individual consciousness for and in itself: innocence in her own strength; the ethical necessities of an unfinished cause — all demand a life to come.

Our survey has made it clear that whatever hopes of immortality arose in Israel, arose by development from the native principles of Israel's religion. The development may have been assisted by the influence of foreign faiths with which the nation came into contact, but of such we know little or nothing. Whatever were the climates which helped to ripen the germs, the germs were Israel's own. Stage by stage we discern a change of attitude on the part of Israel's faith to that view of the state of the dead which the nation received from their ancestors and their kinsfolk. The change appears to be coincident with the general ethical progress of the religion. So long as the interest of the Deity was supposed to be confined to the national interests, the future state was ignored as outside Jahweh's providence. But when the religion of Israel burst its merely national embodiment, and just in proportion as the individual realised his own spiritual life and direct relation to God, Sheol had to be faced, and was faced. So fixed on the mental horizon of Israel had this gloomy prospect become, that many pious Israelites knew to pray for no more than a respite from it. These may be the earlier revolts against Sheol, and those others may be later which, as we have seen, expressed convictions of the impossibility of so dark a fate for the believer in Jahweh, and uttered hopes of his redemption from it. But the question of date is extremely difficult; and we must be content to note that the few late hopes of immortality in the Old Testament broke away, when they did, on the strength of a developed consciousness of the individual's union with Jahweh, and on those ethical principles of Jahweh's religion, which as the wrongs and tyrannies of this life accumulated, had no appeal except to a future judgement.

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[1] Job xix. 25–27.

To follow these hopes further, to trace their essential identity through that new scenery of the next life which was developed in the apocryphal literature, and to find that what gives them their strength in the Old Testament — the permanence of individual character, the need of a future judgement, the faithfulness and omnipotence of God — is what also inspires the New Testament gospel of immortality: all this would be instructive, but it would carry us beyond our proper limits.

### III. *The Use to Our Own Day.*

But you may say that all this is a matter of ancient history and its interest only scientific: 'What use is it to us preachers dealing with the religion of to-day?'

I do not forget that these lectures are primarily intended for preachers. It is because I believe in the practical value to such of the history of the Old Testament hope of immortality that I have traced this history through so much detail. Nay more: I believe that the practical value does not begin where at last the individual's assurance in his future with God breaks away from the visions of Sheol; but that as pastors and teachers you will find in every previous and inferior stage of the development something parallel to, something illustrative of, something charged with consolation for, the experience of the men and women of your own generation.

In the first place, we shall scarcely find to-day any parish or congregation of educated people, in which are not some almost as devoid of hope for the future as the most despairing Psalmist in the Psalter. In the thinking of civilised men there has been for years a steady ebb from the shores of another life. The causes of this are very discernible. There was bound to be a reaction from the excessive 'other-worldliness' of the first half of the century: men had grown sick of its glare.

Their hearts easily yielded to new tendencies, drawing with irresistible force the conscience and the reverence of men upon the present and visible environment of their lives. Science claimed our wonder and expectation for the opening secrets of the material universe ; and not only the individual's future, but his present, which is the one measure and warrant of his future, shrank to nothing before the vastness of forces which rolled on their way indifferent to him and his fate. For a time the great social movements of the age seemed to come to the rescue of the individual, with a gospel of duties and hopes above the material course of nature. Yet the duties were in a present, among whose crowds he felt his littleness still ; and the hopes, like those of early Israel, were for a future which his race, but not he, would share. With such tendencies religion herself largely conspired, emphasising with the absorption of a novice the wonder and sacredness of this life, and turning with the zeal of a penitent to those duties of to-day which she had too long neglected. Such influences were felt, and expressed in literature, long ago ; now they have penetrated humanity. Common men and women encounter them, not upon the heights, where even the darkest mists sometimes break and roll past, but amid the never-settling dust of life, and with hearts which petty trouble has worn bare of all capacity for hope and vision. Such are the drifted souls to whom we have to preach. They are largely unconscious of their exile, but some have God, all have love. When their experience of Him falls beneath the imminence of their own death, or when their love proves her weakness in the death of others, then they are stung by the sense of their hopelessness: far out to sea, not by their own wilfulness but on the intellectual tides of the age, whose progress they had either never observed, or had only rejoiced in the stir and the motion of it. When you find such men and women, you will understand that the Psalms of Israel are not, like the fossils of our great museums, proofs of the stages which our life has passed through and left behind, but are the eternal cries of the human heart. And you will tell your people that such Psalms have been left in God's Word, for proof of how His Spirit—which is elsewhere described as *making intercession for us with groanings that cannot be uttered*—sympathises with those frequent, perhaps inevitable, experiences of humanity, and presents them to God Himself; that they are here preserved in order that all such forwandered souls may see that they have not lost the road, but that others of God's own people passed through these very shades; and lo! the end was not only a far-off sight of the Father, but the end of the agony and strife, to which they contributed their portion, was Christ Himself.

But again, the Old Testament hope of a national immortality, of a widening and ever more glorious future for the race, which absorbed the individual and gave him power to forget his own fate, has its counterpart in our day in the strong enthusiasm and unselfish service which the idea of 'a corporate immortality' has roused in numbers of the best men and women, irrespective of their own salvation. Such a belief is not incompatible — as we see both from the Old Testament forms of it and in many of its modern representatives — with a strong and even a personal faith in God. But to-day it probably attracts most of its votaries, not because it is His promise, but by the grand, confident notes of progress on the visible world, which, by the help of science, it reiterates, as well as by the unselfish and heroic tones in which the devotion of individuals to it is capable of being pitched. Not only have some of the finest poems of the century been inspired by faith in the glorious future of the race and the subordination to it of the individual, but many men and women of high character and full surrender to the service of their kind have been content to find in such a future all their aims and reward, without any expectation of a personal immortality. Life and labour in such a faith have not unplausibly been celebrated as more heroic than that of the Christian, who has worn out his strength for others, or has suffered martyrdom, in the hope of everlasting life for himself with God.

Nevertheless we cannot allow, what many assert, that the belief in a 'corporate immortality' is an advance upon that which it has recently seemed to displace. On the contrary the belief is one which has been already tried and found wanting. As our survey of the Old Testament has shown us, it is not a hope with which human hearts remained satisfied, even when it was presented to them with all the sanctions of an ethical religion, and was loyally accepted by pious men. We cannot wonder, if the moral worth and charm of 'corporate immortality' should from time to time revive their sway over the best and even the most religious of human minds. Yet wherever religion assumes its highest form in the relation of the individual man to God, his Father and Lord, there, as the experience of Israel proves to us, the assurance of personal immortality must sooner or later emerge. And there will conspire with it the strongest instincts of the love of the individual for those who are dearest to him.

Yet while this is true, it is well for us all sometimes to pitch our religious life in terms which do not include the hope of a future.

Most of the crises of religious experience may be achieved, as some of the grandest Psalms fulfil their music, without the echo of one of the far-off bells of heaven. A man may pass through the evangelical experiences of conversion, regeneration and redemption, without thinking any more of the future than the little child thinks, but only sure and glad that his Father is with him. The Old Testament is of use in reminding us that the hope of immortality is one of the secondary and inferential elements of religious experience. Has not Christ Himself summed up the teaching of the Ninetieth Psalm? *Work while it is called to-day, for the night cometh in which no man can work.*

The great thing is to be sure of our individual relation to God. In teaching man that life is in Him and in nothing else, and that the term of our days here has been given us to find Him, the Old Testament has done more for the assurance of immortality than if it had explored the life awaiting us, or had endowed us with strong intellectual conceptions of its reality.

# LECTURE VII

## THE PROPHETS AS PREACHERS TO THEIR OWN TIMES: WITH THEIR INFLUENCE ON THE SOCIAL ETHICS OF CHRISTENDOM

In the previous Lectures of this course we have had occasion to consider several elements in the teaching of the Prophets; but there are others, as relevant to our present task, which we have hardly touched. Of these the principal are the qualities of patriotism which the Prophets illustrate, their travail for their own people and their judgements upon them, their conception of national religion, with the place which they find in that for the individual, and their doctrine of social and civic duties — in a word, the ministry of the Prophets to their own times. But this cannot be adequately treated without an account of the growth in the Christian Church of the *historical* interpretation of the Prophets (as distinguished from the dogmatic and allegorical), and of what has always been the immediate consequence of that interpretation, the influence of the Prophets upon the social ethics of Christendom. In other words, it is impossible to do justice to the preaching of the Prophets to their own time without some appreciation of their message to all times and of its results in Christian civilisation. I hope to attempt this in a manner which shall be no digression from, but a real contribution to, our practical aim in these studies as preachers to our own generation. But besides the civic elements in prophecy there are others, which we have not yet examined. We ought to realise the conception by the Prophets of what we call Law both in nature and in history; and their attitude to miracle. Nor would a course of lectures upon the preacher's use of the Old Testament be complete without some impressions of the general style and genius of those great exemplars of his art.

All these things I propose to take in this Lecture; the influence of the Prophets on the Christian Church in the first part; the qualities of their patriotic ministry in the second part; and in the third the other features of their preaching.

## I. *The Influence of the Prophets on the Christian Church and Civilisation.*

It is pertinent to our purpose to remind ourselves once more that there is no part of the Old Testament upon which Modern Criticism has been so constructive as within the prophetical writings. I do not forget that Criticism has already removed from many of the Prophets large portions of the Books which bear their names; nor that we have entered upon a more thorough analysis of these Books,[1] which may issue in further subtractions of the same kind.[2] But whether a Book be authentic, in the technical meaning of the word, is of small interest compared with its authenticity as vision, as truth and as the revelation of God. To vindicate the authorship of this or that chapter by the man whose name it bears is but a poor service compared with the proof that it rises from real life, that it is the message of a true prophet to living men, and that it deals with the essential problems of human society.[3] In all these high respects the constructive character of Modern Criticism may be fearlessly asserted. The great principle, that a prophet, however far his visions may roam, always starts from the facts of his own day and speaks first to his contemporaries, was revived[4] by Criticism in time for the results of Archæology to be used in its illustration; and nowhere has Archæology done more for the history of Israel, or Criticism more fully employed archæological evidence than throughout the prophetic period. The Hebrew Prophets were contemporaneous with the Empires of Assyria, Babylonia and Persia; and the monuments of these Empires confirm and illustrate the history which the Prophets reflect. The whole world of thought and action from which the prophetical literature springs, and upon which it reacts, is almost as clear and vivid to our eyes as the world of Shakespeare and his dramas.

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[1] See above, pp. 44 f.

[2] No doubt critical ambition has in certain directions of this analysis gone too far for certainty; and we must not anticipate the final consensus of criticism by the acceptance of the ingenious but often arbitrary adventures of individual critics.

[3] Even so uncompromising an opponent of Criticism as the late Mr. D. L. Moody came to see this. He said to me, and I believe wrote also to a friend, that 'it is not the authorship of the Books of the Bible that matters, but the contents.'

[4] The first exegete who had any real instinct of this principle was Theodore of Mopsuestia. For his teaching and other instances of the revival of this principle see below, pp. 227 ff.

The consequence of this exegetical principle and of its illustration by Archæology has been a decided revival of the use of the Prophets by the Christian pulpit. Thirty years ago in Great Britain some observers of our literature and politics alleged a considerable decrease in the influence of the Old Testament.[1] Quotations from it, and allusions to its characters and events were said to be growing less frequent in the speeches and writings of public men. In the pulpit of the same period the uses of the Old Testament were confined to the dogmatic, the apologetic, and the individually ethical. Prophecy was employed for the illustration of dogma, the proof of the Divinity of Christ, and the example of personal religion; but except for the enforcement of Sabbath observance — which, besides, was based on the Law and not on the Prophets — the use made of the social and civic teaching of the Old Testament was very infrequent. The noble examples of the preaching of social duties which were afforded by Kingsley and Maurice[1] bore little fruit, largely I believe because they were not sustained upon a thorough historical criticism of the Prophets.[2] The real recovery of the historical preaching of the Old Testament may be said to have started from the publication of Dean Stanley's *Lectures on the Jewish Church*, and Stanley, while he owed much to his own vision of the Holy Land and to his superb gift of historical painting, was in his views of the religious development of Israel a pupil of Ewald. I need hardly remind you of how the combination of a historical and a practical treatment of the

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[1] I suppose that John Bright was at that time the one statesman of the highest rank whose style of speaking showed any influence of the Old Testament; and Mr. Gladstone and Lord Shaftesbury the only two others who seriously studied it.

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[1] See below, at the close of this section.

[2] Now that we have this we can admire still more than their contemporaries did, the moral sympathy and intuition which enable both these preachers, and especially Maurice (*Prophets and Kings of the Old Testament*), to grasp so firmly the essence of the Prophets' messages to their own day, and to apply it so powerfully to the nineteenth century. Nor need we hesitate to give some of the same praise to Pusey, who, although his interest as a commentator is mainly in the dogmatic and predictive value of the Prophets (*Minor Prophets*), knew, as his University Sermons prove, how to enforce from the pulpit, with great power, their ethical teaching.

Old Testament has progressed in England, upon that reconstruction of Israel's history which succeeded Ewald's,[1] under the powerful leadership of the Old Testament scholars of Oxford and Cambridge; or how it has spread through the Nonconformist ministry upon the impulse of teachers who are equally loyal to the principles of historical criticism. Let me give but one instance of the combination of the methods of modern criticism with fervid and practical preaching from the Prophets — one proof of how false it is to suppose that the adoption of critical results impairs a preacher's power in applying the Old Testament to his own generation. Dr. Farrar accepts the legitimacy of the critical methods, he accepts not a few of their results;[2] yet his preaching has always been warmly ethical and directly applied to the social problems and vices of our day.

In my own country and Church the similar revival of ethical preaching from the Old Testament was due in the first place to the teaching of Professor A. B. Davidson, in its powerful union of spiritual insight with fidelity to the historical situations of Israel, and sympathy with them; and in the second place to the long trial of his pupil, Professor William Robertson Smith, for the critical opinions which he published in the *Encyclopædia Britannica.*[1]

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[1] See above, Lecture II., Section I.

[2] *Lives and Times of the Minor Prophets*, pp. 19, 20; *The Second Book of Kings* and *Daniel* (Expositor's Bible), *passim.*

The official result was Professor Smith's removal from his chair, by what many of us still think to have been an arbitrary use of ecclesiastical power on the part of a majority of the Free Church General Assembly of 1881. But the critical principles for which he fought were never condemned, and his trial — carried from one Church Court to another and debated in almost every Free Church Presbytery in the country — turned out to have been the education of large numbers of men in the meaning of criticism and its effects upon Scripture. Professor Smith appealed from the Church Courts to the people in two series of lectures: one of which, upon *The Prophets of Israel,* was published at a time auspicious to its subject for another reason. In Scottish preaching the broad influence of Thomas Chalmers had almost disappeared;[2] social subjects were infrequently treated by the pulpit, and the Gospel was preached with but little reference to the social and economic duties of Christians. Then came Socialism upon us, with all its trumpets sounding; and although this movement has converted but few to its dogmas, it has assisted to rouse the civic conscience in the Church, and to awaken everywhere a new interest in social questions. Coincident with the beginnings of this interest was the publication of *The Prophets of Israel;* and from the coincidence we may venture to date a revival of the Prophets in the Scottish pulpit. Every department of religious activity felt its effects. Sermons became more ethical; the studies of Bible-classes in the Old Testament, instead of being confined to the historical Books, were extended to the prophetical; and a considerable body of popular literature has appeared, which expounds the teaching of the Prophets and in many cases applies it to modern life.[1] The effect, then, in Britain of the modern criticism of the Prophets may be reckoned as constructive and practical in the highest degree.

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[1] Ninth ed., articles 'Angels,' 'Bible,' 'Chronicles,' 'Deuteronomy,' etc.

[2] There were of course several notable services to social ethics rendered by Scottish ministers: Dr. Begg's, on behalf of farm-servants; Dr. Guthrie's, for city children; and Dr. Blaikie's work, *Better Days for Working People.* But these and other social efforts were for the most part pursued outside the pulpit. One still useful series of sermons on the Old Testament are those of William Arnot on the Book of Proverbs, *Laws from Heaven for Life on Earth.*

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[1] I am unaware how far this latter phenomenon has appeared in other lands. But in Holland there was the work of J. J. P. Valeton, jun., *Amos en Hosea*, 1894, which contains this passage: 'These prophecies have a word of God, as for all times, so especially for our own. Before all it is relevant to "the social question" of our day, to the relation of religion and morality. . . . Often it has been hard for me to refrain from expressly pointing out the agreement between Then and To-day.' And in Germany there was Cornill's Frankfort lectures to educated laymen, *Der Israelitische Prophetismus* (1894). Both of these are by advanced critics of the first rank.

I have thus begun with our own times, because they are naturally of most religious interest to us. But I now ask you to go back with me upon that survey which I promised of the influence of the Old Testament, and in particular of the Prophets, upon the social ethics of Christendom from the earliest times to the age before our own. We shall see how strangely diverse the character of that influence has been. The candid student, who carefully traces its effects upon European civilisation, is still left to question whether the cruelties and superstitions which were sanctioned by an appeal to Hebrew example, or the legislation and struggles for reform which were inspired by the Law and the Prophets, have been the more conspicuous and influential. Yet of this there can be no doubt, that where a historical criticism of the Old Testament, however imperfect, was cultivated, there the immediate effect upon Christian preaching from the Old Testament was sound and practical to a very high degree.

Even before the establishment of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire the political influence of the Old Testament began to be pervasive and conspicuous. No one can examine early Christian inscriptions without being struck by the fact that the quotations from Scripture which they contain are almost all drawn from the Books of the Old Testament, but are often modified so as to give them a Christian significance.[1] The application of the Old Testament to domestic life must have been nearly universal in early Christianity. The sense of the Divine protection of the home, and the influence of those examples of family virtue which the Hebrew Scriptures record, are frequently expressed; nor can such teaching as that of Deuteronomy and the Proverbs have failed to permeate the private life of the Church. Besides these there were the more formal and public results. Excluded from the society of the world in which she existed, the primitive Church had to legislate not only for the worship, but for the social life and discipline of her members. In her circumstances, she could organise only upon a theocratic basis, and such was found already developed and detailed within her Old Testament Canon. It is easy to perceive how, in the government of the Church — especially in her hierarchy and in her judgement of heretics — there came to be sanctioned, by appeal to the letter of the Hebrew Scriptures,[2] principles and tempers which were hostile to Christ's teaching, and which in their subsequent development have engendered the rankest tyranny and superstition. On this I dwelt sufficiently in the first Lecture.

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[1] I was very much impressed by this when reading the early Christian inscriptions still extant on the hard basalt of Hauran and other regions east of the Jordan; and the impression was confirmed by a study of Le Bas and Waddington's collection of Greek inscriptions. On lintels of houses and tombstones the LXX. version is frequently quoted, with the substitution of Χριστός for Κύριος or Θεός (cf. *Historical Geography of the Holy Land*, p. 634).

[2] Especially in the *Apostolic Constitutions*, and by Cyprian. Cf. Diestel, *Gesch. des Alten Testaments in der Christlichen*

While these evils were aggravated through the adoption of Christianity by the Imperial power, we perceive from this event onwards another effect of the Old Testament of a more wholesome quality. The influence of the Jewish codes upon the legislation and public morals of the Empire from Constantine to Justinian has never been critically treated; but this is certain, that 'the laws of Moses were received as the divine original of justice';[1] and that it was their example which braced Roman legislators to put down the bestial sins, and to treat all sexual vice with more severity than the Imperial authorities had previously attempted.[2]

Following the example of the Apostles, the preachers of the early Church, whether in argument or homily, made continual use of the Old Testament. The prevailing method of inter-

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*Kirche*, pp. 141 ff.; Gibbon, *Decline and Fall*, ch. xxviii., end of first paragraph.

[1] Gibbon, ch. xliv.: vol. v. p. 322 in Smith's edition.

[2] *Ibid.* 322 ff. Diestel (*Gesch. des A. T.*, 151 f.) mentions the *Lex Dei: sive Mosaicarum et Romanarum legum collatio*, by Licinius Rufinus, towards the end of the fifth century. It is a list of parallels between the Mosaic and Roman Laws: it is important in so far as it proves the high value which was accorded to the Mosaic Law in that period, but it 'does not prove a direct influence' of that law on the Imperial legislation.

pretation was the allegorical. This arbitrary and dangerous habit arose very naturally in the ordinary employment of the Bible for purposes of edification; and it was confirmed, partly by the Church's efforts to explain away the moral and other difficulties of Old Testament history, and partly by the exigencies of her polemic against the Jews. In hostility to the application of Prophecy to Christ, Jewish writers insisted upon the literal sense of the prophetic word, and confined its significance to the history of Israel. The Church replied by allegorising as much of the Word as it could. Individual morals were, of course, directly enforced from Hebrew examples;[1] but the early fathers were interested in the Old Testament mainly for its types and predictions of Christ. The allegorical became the orthodox exegesis, and was at last reduced to a theory by Origen,[2] and elaborated into a system by the school which he founded. The effort to distinguish the primary sense of the text was indeed not wholly abandoned; but the healthy instinct which led to it was too bare of knowledge and of insight to render the result consistent or fertile. When the heretics began to outdo the orthodox in allegorical exposition, the latter awoke to the dangers of the habit they had fostered and loudly proclaimed the need of sobriety and reason in the pursuit of it. But the historical sense of the age was small, and till the close of the fourth century no exegete succeeded in finding his feet upon a sound historical basis. Thus allegory, prompted now by dogmatic audacity and now by apologetic fearfulness, exercised, with almost no restraint, its confusing and evaporating influence upon the preaching of the Christian pulpit.

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[1] *E.g.* by Clement of Rome, *Epistle to the Corinthians.*

[2] 185–254 A. D.

To the school of Antioch belongs the fame of training the Church in sounder principles of exegesis, and, as their immediate consequence, in a more practical application of the Old Testament to the life of the day. Theodore, afterwards of Mopsuestia, was the greatest representative of the former; John, surnamed Chrysostom, the most illustrious example of the latter.[1] Both were pupils of Diodorus of Tarsus, who, though his works have perished and his fame has disappeared behind that of his successors, must have been — by the characteristics these possessed in common and probably derived from him, as well as by the few reports of his principles which have reached us — a teacher of unusual originality and impressiveness.[2] Theodore of Mopsuestia has been justly styled, 'Veteris Testamenti sobrie interpretandi vindex';[1] he may even be hailed as the father of historical exegesis. He did not use the Hebrew original, and had to work with the Greek versions; but he was the first to break with any power from the speculative methods which the school of Origen had fastened upon the Church's interpretation of Scripture; and the first to follow with some consistency the lines of a historical interpretation. To Theodore the prophecies and types of the Old Testament had, besides their references to the future, a prior value in themselves and for the age to which they were delivered. Considering the traditions which encumbered his generation and the knowledge of ancient history at his disposal, Theodore's vision of the intrinsic worth and contemporary reference of the prophetical writings was only less wonderful than the courage with which he asserted the consequences of this principle in his criticism of the Psalms and other Scriptures.[2]

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[1] Theodore, *c.* 350–429: Chrysostom, 347–407.

[2] *Caten. Niceph.* i. 524, according to which he declared that he much preferred the historical, to the allegorical, exegesis.

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[1] By Sieffert in the title of his work *Theodorus Mopsuestenus*, 1827. See also, *Theod. v. Mops. u. Junilius Africanus*, by Kihn, 1880.

[2] The only Old Testament work of Theodore's which is extant is that on *The Twelve Prophets:* A. Mai, *Nova Patr. Bibl.* vii. 1854; Migne, *Patrologia Græca*, vol. lxvi. His historical explanations of the Old Testament do not of course preclude typical references to the New. Old and New are part of the same economy of Divine grace. We hear from others that he denied value to the titles of the Psalms; that he referred the Messianic Psalms to Hezekiah and Zerubbabel, leaving only three with a reference to Jesus Christ; that he denied prophetic inspiration to Job and the Solomonic literature; and rejected Chronicles with Ezra and Nehemiah.

His pupils, especially Theodoret, afterwards Bishop of Kyros,[1] carried on the example of their master.

Chrysostom began to write probably as early as Theodore. His first work on the Old Testament was, like that of the latter, exegetical: a 'Hermeneia' or 'Interpretation' of the Prophet Isaiah,[2] but he never finished it. Drawn by his superb gifts to the pulpit, he delivered to the Church the rest of his Old Testament studies in the form of Homilies, of which six, still extant, expand and apply his views — already given in the 'Interpretation' — of the first verse of Isaiah's vision and of the Seraphs.[3]

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[1] Theodoret, d. 457. His works were edited in four folio volumes in 1642 by Sirmond. The first two volumes contain those on the Old Testament: vol. i. Ἐρωτήσεις or *Quæstiones* to the Octateuch, Kings and Chronicles, with a Ἑρμηνεία or Interpretation of the Psalms and Canticles; vol. ii. Interpretations of Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel and the Twelve Prophets, and an epitome of his Interpretation of Isaiah. An adequate sketch of his teaching on the Old Testament is given by Diestel, *Gesch. des A. T. in der Christl. Kirche*, pp. 133 ff. 'Dass Typus und "Wahrheit" oft noch neben einander, nicht in einander stehen, und dem *ἡ μὲν ἱστόρια ἐδίδαξεν* ein *ἡμεῖς δὲ μανθάνομεν* gegenübertritt; dass die Schrift des A. T.'s so zu verstehen ist wie sie den Juden selbst hat nützen können (cf. interrog. 52 in Genesim).'

[2] Vol. vi. of the standard edition of his works by de Montfaucon (Paris 1835). The editor quotes with approval Tillemont's opinion that this unfinished work was not later than 377 A.D.

[3] *Ibid.:* besides there are Homilies and Sermons from Chrysostom on Genesis and on David and Saul (vol. iv.); on the Psalms (vol. v.), on several Old Testament texts, and two on 'the Obscurity of the Prophetic Writings,' with others, and a 'Hermeneia' of Daniel (all of these in vol. vi.), and on the Books of the Maccabees (vol. ii.).

The introduction to his 'Hermeneia' of Isaiah defines the principles of the new exegesis. The ministry of the Prophets to their own generation has never been more finely described — as a ministry not only of judgement but of love and fellow-suffering. 'Now of all the prophets and saints this was the spirit: in disposition towards them over whom they were set they excelled the tender affection of fathers, and by a long way outdid the sovereignty of nature . . . for there is no qualification for office so important as a soul that loves wisdom and knows how to suffer with others.'[1] It is the picture of the Prophets by one who was himself a prophet; we will not marvel that the man who so intuitively understood his great forerunners was impelled to leave his study for the imitation of them among his own people. Chrysostom's homilies on the Old Testament are not a little engaged with argument against the Jews, and in defence of predictions of Christ; to that extent they are less direct than his magnificent preaching on the Gospels and Epistles. But from the first he endeavours to keep allegorising in a secondary place. He reckons historical explanation to be

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[1] Καὶ πάντων δὲ τῶν προφητῶν καὶ τῶν ἁγίων τοιοῦτον τὸ ἔθος· πατέρων φιλοστοργίαν τῇ περὶ τοὺς ἀρχομένους ἀπέκρυψαν διαθέσει, καὶ τὴν τῆς φύσεως τυραννίδα ἐκ πολλοῦ τοῦ περίοντος ὑπερηκόντισαν . . . καὶ γὰρ οὐδὲν οὕτως ἐπιτήδειον εἰς ἀρχῆς αἵρεσιν ὡς ψυχὴ φιλόσοφος καὶ συναλγεῖν ἐπισταμένη (vi. 2, ed. Montfaucon).

'the more true';[1] and, thus discerning the ethical essence of the Prophets, he scourges the vices and consoles the sufferings of Antioch with the words of Isaiah to Jerusalem. The school of Antioch is another proof of the principle we have found instanced in our own time, that the revival of a true historical criticism means a revival of the practical use of the Old Testament in the Christian pulpit. Recognise that the fundamental meaning of the prophecies must be that which they bore to the living generation to whom they were first addressed;[2] and you are at once inspired by their message to the men of your own time.

In the Western Church the influence of Origen continued to prevail; and the interpretation of the Bible was not enfranchised from the allegorising methods of the Alexandrian school. Ambrose and Augustine[3] appear to have confined their exegetical work upon the Old Testament to the Pentateuch, some of the historical Books, the Psalms, Job, and scattered passages; upon the Prophets we have from them nothing elaborate. Properly, therefore, they fall outside the intention of this review; yet a few sentences may be devoted to the general style of Augustine's exegesis.[1] As an interpreter, Augustine was above all the mystic and allegorist. It is true that the restlessness and ingenuity of his mind were constantly dissatisfied with a method of exposition so cheap and so easily abused, and that his inherited inclination to allegory was besides frequently arrested by difficulties in the text and history of Scripture which this method was unable to solve. He aimed to write a commentary on Genesis *ad litteram:* 'that is to say, not according to allegorical significations but accordding to the inherent quality of the transactions as they happened';[2] and he expressly affirmed that the spiritual sense of a passage ought to be drawn from it 'only provided that the historical truth has first been conserved';[3] and again, 'if any Scripture is to be investigated, let us inquire in what manner a thing has been said, apart from the allegorical signification.'[1] These are sound directions, but Augustine had neither the knowledge nor the temperament to carry them out. He was ignorant of Hebrew;[2] therefore incapable of a grammatical exegesis, and dependent on the philological fancies of others. The difficulties, which his subtle mind detected in the allegorising of his predecessors, the same mind solved with fresh and more plausible imaginations. It is true that he did not always go astray—though the credit of this was his own rather than that of his methods. In so elastic a system of exegesis, so magnificent a genius for religion could not fail frequently to reach the truth: so fruitful a spirit was certain nearly always to be edifying. In a misty atmosphere like that of allegory the small man is lost altogether, while the large man often looms the larger and moves majestically. Therefore, however dim be his light, the motions of Augustine are generally worth following. Especially in his exposition of the Psalms, amid not a little to amuse and much to weary, we find almost more that is suggestive and practical. Again and again Augustine discovers the essence of a Psalm; or if this be missed, he leaves us with scattered sentences of glorious insight and inspiration. Jerome,[1] who adorns a rank as high as Origen's in the history of the textual criticism of the Old Testament, did not, in spite of his occasional use of better methods, escape from the orthodox routine of a subjective and allegorical exegesis. His principal service was to recall the Church to the original of the greater half of her Scriptures, and to present her with a Latin version of the Old Testament based on the Hebrew text. Jerome does not himself fall within a review of the Church's preaching from the Prophets; but for the next thousand years he guided with Augustine the influence, for good and evil, of the Old Testament upon the Christian pulpit.

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[1] *Ibid.* p. 17 on Isa. i. 22, Ἐγὼ δὲ οὔτε ταύτην ἀτιμάζω τὴν ἐξήγησιν, *i.e.* the allegorical, καὶ τὴν ἑτέραν ἀληθεστέραν εἶναί φημι.

[2] See the extract from Theodoret above, p. 229, n. 1.

[3] Besides these Hilary of Poitiers wrote on the Psalms and Canticles. See Diestel, *Geschichte des A. T. in d. Christl. Kirche*, p. 78.

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[1] Augustine's works on the Old Testament are these (given along with the volume of the Benedictine edition of his works in which each occurs): — vol. i. *De Genesi contra Manichaeos libri II.;* vol. iii. *De Genesi ad Litteram imperfectus Liber* (only some fifteen pages); *De Genesi ad Litteram Libri xii.* (he explains the title in his *Retract.* ii. 24, thus: id est non secundum allegoricas significationes sed secundum rerum gestarum proprietatem; the work extends only to the expulsion from Eden); *Locutionum libri vii.* Genesis to Judges: *Questionum in Heptateuchum lib. vii.; Annotationum in Job lib. i.;* vol. iv. *Enarrationes in Psalmos;* vol. v. many sermons on Old Testament passages; and vol. viii. the sections of the *De Civitate Dei,* discussed below, p. 252. The *Enarrationes in Psalmos* are translated in six volumes of the Oxford Library of the Fathers (1847–57).

[2] *Retract.* ii. 24: see previous note.

[3] *De Civitate Dei,* xvii. 3: 'audeant sensum intelligentiae spiritalis exsculpere, servata primitus duntaxat historiae veritate.'

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[1] *De Genesi ad Litteram*, i. 2: 'quaeramus quomodo dictum est, praeter allegoricam significationem.'

[2] *Confess.* xi. 5: *De Sermone in Monte*, i. 23. The version which Augustine used was the old Latin version known to us as the *Itala*: *De Doctr. Christiana*, ii. 14.

It was not, however, in preaching that during this millennium the influence of the Old Testament was most effective; but on ecclesiastical constitutions and in the defence of dogma. Of the first of these the growth of the Canon Law and of the claims of the Papacy are the most striking instances; of the second, the writings of the scholastic theologians. The Canon Law almost everywhere borrows from the Hebrew theocracy: the Papal throne and its defenders appeal to the rights of the Levitical hierarchy, and to the High

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[1] Died 420.

Priest's assumption of the temporal power. The commentaries of Thomas Aquinas[1] on some of the Prophets,[2] while often clearly, though coldly, suggestive of truth,[3] attempt to discover predictions of the great facts of the Evangel and of all the chief dogmas of the Church in the most irrelevant passages.[4] Bernard of Clairvaux's eighty-six sermons on the Song of Solomon are representative of the *furor typologicus* of the time. Yet as Diestel rightly reminds us,[5] a great deal of the practical preaching of the Middle Ages reflects directly the examples of Hebrew history, and the plain ethical sense of the prophetic writings. And we must not forget how the Psalms, in the musical Latin to which the Vulgate had set them, were as a stream of living water through all those thousand years, refreshing personal piety and the public worship of the Church. But apart from such exceptions, the principal purposes to which the Christian Church put the Old Testament, between the disappearance of the great theologians of the fifth century and the eve of the Reformation, were purposes typological, ecclesiastical and dogmatic. For her ethics during the greater part of that period the Church deserted the Prophets for the moralists of Greece and Rome.[1]

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[1] Died 1274.

[2] See vol. i. of the second Venetian edition (1775) of his works, comprising commentaries to Job, the first fifty-one Psalms and the Song of Songs; and vol ii. commentaries to Isaiah, Jeremiah and Lamentations.

[3] *E.g.* on Jer. vii. and xxxi.

[4] *E.g.* on Isaiah liii. the phrase, *a root out of a dry ground*, which he takes as a prediction of the virgin birth of Christ.

[5] Page 225.

From the twelfth to the fifteenth century better means of understanding the Hebrew text were gradually acquired by the Church, and for the most part from the works of Jews or Jewish proselytes. With the increase of such instruments for criticism, there arose bolder attempts at sound methods of exegesis; and by necessary consequence the practical use of the Old Testament exhibited many signs of improvement.[2] It is now that we meet with the first real successor of Chrysostom in the homiletic exposition of the Prophets. Savonarola,[3] besides reviving a pure Gospel, was a preacher of civic righteousness, and he became so by his sermons upon Micah and other Prophetical Books.[4] Of twenty-nine sermons preached by him at Florence between Easter and Advent 1496, and taken down by Ser Lorenzo Violi, only two are from New Testament texts, and one of these, on the Ascension, is largely occupied by an exposition of the story of Balaam. Five expound the Book of Ruth, and thirteen the prophecies of Micah. The others are from texts in 2 Chronicles, in five Psalms, in Isaiah vi., and in Ecclesiastes vii. In all of these sermons the current politics of that year are dealt with; and the teaching of the Old Testament is applied to the dangers and vices of the citizens of Florence.

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[1] For a practical instance of this see below, p. 254, on Dante's *De Monarchia.*

[2] The two names of this period which stand forth before a crowd of others in the respects above mentioned are that of the celebrated Nikolaus of Lyra (d. 1340) whose influence was very great on exegesis both before and after the Reformation: *cf.* the saying: 'Si Lyra non lyrasset, Lutherus non saltasset'; and that of Reuchlin, whose *Rudimenta Linguae Hebrææ* was not published till the beginning of the sixteenth century: 1506.

[3] 1452–1498.

[4] *Works*, in six volumes, 1633-40; *Prediche di F. Girolamo Savonarola: edizione integra . . . per cura di* Giuseppe Baccini: Florence 1889. These are the sermons preached in 1496. A short life of Savonarola and appendices are given.

After the Reformation the linguistic aids to the interpretation of the Old Testament rapidly multiplied, and with them the practice of a grammatical and historical exegesis became predominant. Many of the leading Reformers were as fully acquainted with Hebrew as the improved culture of their time permitted, and though still hampered by the traditional allegorising, they boldly stated, and frequently exemplified, the duty of holding to the simple sense of Scripture. 'I have grounded my preaching,' said Luther, 'on the literal word.'[1] To him, as to Melanchthon and Zwingli, allegory was permissible only as 'rhetoric' and 'ornament,' the means of attracting common and uneducated minds. As his career advanced he more fully dispensed with it: 'I have shaken it off, and my best art is to render Scripture in the simple sense.' There are also real flashes of historical insight in his critical pronouncements, that it does not matter much 'if Moses did not himself write the Pentateuch'; that many of the Prophetical Books, for example Isaiah, Jeremiah and Hosea, contain additions, and have received their present forms from later writers; and that the Book of Job is not history but a poem or drama. Apart from the value of these particular utterances the Church owes to Luther the greatest example yet offered to her of the Christian liberty of a discriminating judgement on the Old Testament.[1] Yet through-

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[1] *Table Talk*, ch. i. His frequently expressed opinions in this regard are summed up in ch. lix.: 'Allegories and Spiritual Significations, when they are directed upon Faith and seldom used, then they are good and laudable, but when they are drawn upon the life and conversation, then they are dangerous and I am an enemy unto them. . . . St. Jerome and Origen (God forgive it

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them) holp thereunto that Allegories were held in such esteem. . . . Now I have shaken it off and my best art is *Tradere Scripturam simplici sensu*, that is to deliver the Scripture in the simple sense: the same doth the deed: therein is life, strength, doctrine and Art; in the other is nothing but foolishness, let it lustre and shine how it will. St. Austin gave a rule: *Quod Figura et Allegoria nihil probet sed Historia*, *Verba et Grammatica*, *i.e.* that Figure and Allegories prove nothing at all, but Historie, Words and Grammar' (Capt. Henrie Bell's translation). Besides his Translation (1534) Luther's work on the Old Testament consisted of sermons and expositions in Latin and German on Genesis, Exodus and Deuteronomy; Isaiah, Ezekiel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Micah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zechariah, Malachi, Daniel, many Psalms, Canticles and Ecclesiastes (all apparently between 1523 and 1546).

[1] See Lecture I.

out Luther was the preacher rather than the interpreter. His exposition, like his criticism, of Scripture, if not dominated, was constantly interrupted, by his personality with its rude human vigour and its marvellous experience of Divine grace. Sometimes it is the native Luther who thus breaks out, as in the almost truculent sentences upon the Prophets, the Epistle of James and the Apocalypse; but far oftener it is the 'new Luther,' the man who has passed through the struggles in the Erfurt cloister, and has been saved by faith. Thus, though he violates 'the simple sense' of many passages, and overlooks small but not insignificant points in others, he carries our hearts with him to lofty and far-reaching views of God's purposes of salvation as they lie spread out across both Testaments. Köstlin, his principal biographer in our time, has thus justly characterised Luther's exposition: 'The whole delivery of Luther's teaching preserves that quality of fresh life which we have pointed out in connection with his first writings. . . . The fundamental doctrine of salvation, as it always moved himself, so in his utterances it constantly presses into the foreground and the centre; this is an essential peculiarity of his exposition of Scripture and of his sermons. In the former he knows how to soar on every occasion to the highest points of view, and to spread spirit and life across apparently barren sections of his course. In the treatment of such scriptures as have no immediate original connection with those fundamental doctrines, as also in the definition within a text of those details, which, in contrast to its leading thoughts, have only a subordinate importance, the claims of historical and linguistic accuracy do not always come to their rights.'[1]

The soundest exegete of the time was John Calvin: considering his means and opportunities, we may call him the greatest expositor of all time. 'To real exegetic skill he unites the full freedom of a Theodore of Mopsuestia with the profundity of a Luther.'[2] Calvin's knowledge of Hebrew;[3] his command not only of the historic circumstance but of the mental atmosphere[4] of the different periods, from which the Old Testament arose; his fairness even to the confession of errors in Scripture, combined with his healthy indifference as to their presence;[1] his single-hearted aim to give the original meaning of the sacred authors; his appreciation of the essence of prophecy, not as prediction, but 'as the message of God to men,' 'the interpreting and administering of revelation';[2] his contempt for allegory;[3] his independence of tradition, and stout refusal to find proofs for doctrine in irrelevant texts;[4] his sobriety and sense of proportion — all these sincere qualities are at the command of a profound religious insight, and of a spirit desirous to know only what God has willed to say.[1] Among Calvin's expositions many moderns give preference to those on the Psalms; to me it seems as if his interpretations of the Prophets were still greater: in so far as with the latter he finds more solid ground in date and circumstance for his original gifts of historical exegesis. But on every Book of the Old Testament Calvin is a commentator whom neither the modern exegete nor the modern preacher can afford to neglect.

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[1] Herzog's *Real-Encyclopädie*, second ed. ix. 72.

[2] Diestel, *op. cit.* p. 269.

[3] Calvin himself makes no assertion of his knowledge of Hebrew; and Simon, the early critic of the Pentateuch (see above, p. 33), denied that he knew enough for practical purposes. But the fact has been admitted even by his enemies — he at least is a Reformer to whom Roman controversialists allow an adequate acquaintance with the original languages of Scripture. Compare too the tributes of Diestel and Tholuck to his linguistic endowments. But indeed his mastery of Hebrew, though never displayed, is felt throughout all his commentaries on the Old Testament. Beza, his biographer, after saying that Calvin was a friend of Grynæus and Capito, adds 'seseque Hebraicis literis dedit.' See for the details *Calvin Hébraisant*, by Professor Antoine J. Baumgartner of Geneva (Paris 1889), a very interesting inquiry as to where and how Calvin learned his Hebrew.

[4] Cf. his admission of the exilic atmosphere of Isaiah lv.

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[1] On Matthew xxvii. 9: 'Quo modo Hieremiae nomen obrepserit, me nescire fateor, nec anxie laboro; certe Hieremiae nomen errore positum esse pro Zacharia, res ipsa ostendit.' 'In what way the name of Jeremiah has stolen in here, I confess I do not know, nor do I trouble myself about it; *that the name of Jeremiah has been by error substituted for that of Zechariah, the thing itself clearly shows.*' On Acts vii. 16 — Stephen's statement that Jacob's and other patriarchs' bodies were carried to Shechem to be buried in a sepulchre which Abraham bought of the sons of Emmor (father or son ?) of Sychem—Calvin remarks, 'in nomine Abrahae erratum palam esse. Quare hic locus corrigendus est.' 'As every one can see, an error has been made in the name of Abraham. Wherefore this passage has to be corrected.'

[2] So he defines it on 1 Cor. xii. 9; xiv. 6.

[3] On 1 Cor. ix. 8: 'Some hairbrained spirits take occasion from this to turn everything into allegories. Thus they change dogs into men, trees into angels, and all Scripture into a laughing-stock.'

[4] See above, p. 146, his criticism of alleged Messianic prophecies. Calvin's exegesis is curiously independent of his somewhat rigorous doctrine of Scripture.

May I remind you in a sentence that I am not now giving the full doctrine of Scripture which the Reformers held, but that my purpose is only to show how far founded upon grammar and history and how far true to 'the simple sense' their exegesis was.[2] Once more we see the practical effect of such methods. The great exegetes of the Reformation, and their immediate followers,[1] guided a Church for whose use translations of the Bible were being made into the various vernaculars and everywhere multiplied by the art of printing. The more scientific exegesis had given the Bible to the people; and the result was the practical influence of the Old Testament upon the pulpit, the school and the state to an extent beyond what was reached by any previous age. Luther had unfortunately described the political activity of the Prophets as 'so much hay, straw and wood among the genuine silver and gold' of their work — as if thier political messages could be separated from their religion! Partly because of the sounder example of Calvin in the historical exegesis which he illustrated, and partly because of a wider use of the Bible in public worship, the influence of the Old Testament in Switzerland and other regions of the Reformed Church, as distinguished from the Lutheran, was more ethical than it came to be among the Lutherans themselves. Yet almost everywhere the Prophets began to speak to the new generations. From the time of the Reformation to our own there never has been a city of Protestant Europe which has been stirred to higher ideals of justice and purity, without the rewaking of those ancient voices which declared to Jacob his sin and to Israel his transgression. Once more the revival of a sounder criticism was followed by the revival of a more practical preaching. The fidelity which sought to discover what the Prophets actually meant to the men of their own time was rewarded by the inspiration of their message to the men of all times.

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[1] Calvin's claim for himself is not exaggerated (Epistle Dedicatory to his Commentary on *The Twelve Prophets*): 'If God has endued me with any aptness for the interpretation of Scripture, I am fully persuaded that I have faithfully and carefully endeavoured to exclude from it all barren refinements — however plausible and fitted to please the ear — and to preserve genuine simplicity, adapted solidly to edify the children of God, who being not content with the shell wish to penetrate to the kernel' (Owen's translation, Edin. 1846).

[2] For a statement of the Reformers' doctrine of Scripture, and a discrimination between it on the one hand and the views of mediæval theologians and modern evangelicals and certain Broad churchmen on the other, see an article by Professor T. M. Lindsay in the *Expositor*, fourth series, vol. x. (July–December 1894) pp. 241 ff. on 'Professor W. Robertson Smith's Doctrine of Scripture.'

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[1] For a full list of these see Diestel, *op. cit.* 269 ff.

It is unnecessary to give full illustration of this within the English-speaking Churches. Suffice it to remember the earlier Puritans like Henry Smith with his 'Scriptures for Magistrates' from the eighty-second Psalm, and his 'Memento for Magistrates' from the forty-fifth;[1] and the later Puritans, like Goodwin, whose sermons to the House of Commons on public occasions were nearly always upon Old Testament texts; or like Cromwell, whose addresses to his parliaments so often started, or were enforced, from the same sources.[2]

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[1] *The Sermons of Mr. Henry Smith gathered into one volume*, with an introduction by Thomas Fuller, and dedicated to William Cicill, Lord Burleigh, Treasurer of England, 1657. Smith was 'commonly called *the silver-tongued preacher*, and that was but one metall below St. Chrysostom himself' (Fuller). How practical his preaching from the Old Testament was (and the same might be illustrated from other Puritan preachers) may be seen from the 'one instance of many of the great prevalency he had with his auditory' which Fuller gives. 'He preached a sermon on *Sarah's* nursing of *Isaac*, and thereupon grounded the general doctrine, *that it was the duty of all mothers to nurse their own children*, allowing dispensation to such who were unsufficienced by weakness, want of milk, or any avouchable impediment. He prest the application without respect of persons high or low, rich or poor, one with another.'

[2] Carlyle, *Cromwell's Letters and Speeches*, vol. iv.

The rise and elaboration of the Federal idea of Revelation,[1] led in Great Britain to a detailed extension of the political uses of the Old Testament in preaching which lasted even into the nineteenth century. In Scotland especially this was inspired, not only by the institutions of the Law, but by the patriotism, national romance and passion of the historical and prophetical Books. To-day the proudest memories of the Scottish people are associated with the struggles and heroisms of Old Testament history. It was not merely that for two centuries the prevailing theology in Scotland conceived of God's relation to man under the form of a covenant; but as in Israel's case the covenant was understood as national and it comprised every public interest. The Scottish preachers, who in times of persecution taught their suffering nation to see herself in the Trampled Vine, the Desolate City and the Remnant of God's pity and promise, in times of peace enforced upon every department of her life the whole righteousness of ancient Israel. Nor did they always preach that legalism, which being falsely imputed to Scotland has moved some[2] to call her in scorn 'the Judæa of the West.' It is true that they were sometimes dogmatically national. Even the greatest theologians of the seventeenth century were apt to confine the covenant to the visible Church, and in the spirit of Deuteronomy to include within its obligations none that extended beyond the limits of their own nation. The late Dr. Walker, in his admirable work on *The Theology and Theologians of Scotland*,[1] says that 'the seventeenth century divines were greatly hampered by what I may call their Judaic theory of the world's conversion. Our modern idea of the visible Church, as a kingdom of faith pushing out in bold aggressions on every side . . . aiming at nothing less than the spiritual subjugation of the world to the faith and obedience of the gospel, was very faintly realised in that earlier period of our history. What our fathers rather thought of was a sort of expansion of nationalism after the Jewish fashion, in which, when God has elect ones among a people to be gathered in, He takes the nation into external covenant with Himself, and within the order, and under the ordinances of a visible Church as His "office-house of grace,"—not excluding the aid extrinsic of the sword of the magistrate. . . . "To have the doctrine of the covenant preached to a nation," says Rutherford, "and Christ offered to them is to be the planted vineyard of the Lord. The field is the field of the visible kingdom of

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[1] Originating with the fathers of the Reformation, but reduced to a system by Coccejus — *Summa doctrina de foedere Dei et testamento explicata*, J. Coccejo, 1648 — and other seventeenth-century theologians.

[2] *E.g.* Heine.

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[1] First Edition, Edinburgh, 1872, p. 58 ff.

Christ because the world of all natural men is not the Lord's field, where He soweth His wheat, but the visible Church is only such a field."' Thus in modern Scotland fervent Christian men were so infected by formal Judaism as to fall into the error, for which the prophet Jonah (as the type of Israel) is rebuked and punished in the Book which bears his name. It was Thomas Boston and the so-called 'marrow-men' who came to the rescue of Scotland from so narrow and nationalist an interpretation of the covenant of grace. 'Boston and the marrow-men,' continues Dr. Walker, 'first of all among our divines entered freely into the missionary spirit of the Bible; were able to see that Calvinistic doctrine'—that is especially in the covenanting principles which it borrowed from the Old Testament—'was not inconsistent with world-conquering aspirations and efforts.'

Within the religious life of the nation, the legalism of the covenanting theology yielded to more spiritual forces. Most of the preachers of the Covenant, like the Prophets of Israel, kept before their people the Person of their King rather than the letter of His Law. It was not legal obedience they demanded, but those chivalrous affections which are as the fire to cleanse national life and to enkindle in a people the ardours of sacrifice and service—'zeal for the glory of God,' 'love to the Lord Jesus Christ,' 'the sole King and Head of the Church'—and the faith that He is identified with the poor and the oppressed. Of the Scottish people in that heroic age the saying is true in which the heathen seer described the people of Israel:

> *The Lord his God is with him,*
> *And the noise of a King is among them.*[1]

This period was not without its able exegetes, independent of tradition and with a conscience to interpret Scripture upon such scientific methods as were at the disposal of their time.[2] But either they were not consistent in carrying out these methods, or they were more or less destitute of sympathy with the religious meaning of what they treated, and sometimes subject to intellectual tempers almost as dogmatic as the traditional views which they abjured. The period also produced philosophic critics, who anticipated not only many of the principles, but some of the conclusions of modern criticism.[3] And to this period belongs the fame — often unjustly ignored by the more scientific age which has eclipsed it — of solid contributions to the philology of the Old Testament,[4] and of the origins of the modern sciences of sacred chronology and archæology.[1] The practical preaching of the period did not remain uninfluenced by such essays. The study of the original languages of Scripture, as well as of Syriac, was pursued by many of the ordinary ministers of all the Protestant Churches in Great Britain; while a few of the better-known names are still associated with the reputation of high proficiency in Oriental learning. My own countrymen, whether harassed by the persecutions of the seventeenth century or absorbed by the reconstruction of their Church and her theological controversies in the beginning of the eighteenth, found time to produce works both on the Hebrew language and on the exegesis of the Old Testament. They used alike the leisure of exile and the occasions of their parish ministry to the furtherance of a scholarship which more than once received the praise of

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[1] Numbers xxiii. 21.

[2] One has only to recall Grotius.

[3] Like Hobbes, Collins and Spinoza. Simon too started the analysis of the Pentateuch before the end of the seventeenth century, and was followed by Astruc in the eighteenth (see above Lecture II.). All through the period there were *Critica Sacra* issued by various scholars.

[4] Like the works of Erpenius, Golius, Buxtorf, De Dieu,

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Schultens and others in the grammar and lexicography of the Oriental languages.

[1] In chronology Scaliger's, Lightfoot's and Ussher's are the foremost names: in archæology, among a crowd of works the most famous are Samuel Bochart's *Phaleg and Canaan* 1646, and *Hierozoicon* 1663; Reland's *Palaestina* 1714, and other treatises; with the Travels of Maundrell 1697, Pococke 1737, and Hasselquist 1749 ff. Or in another department Goodwin, *Moses and Aaron* 1610; Cunäus, *De Republica Hebraeorum*, libr. iii. ed. Elz. 1632; Selden in *De Jure Naturali et Gentium* and *Uxor Ebraica*, besides *De Diis Syriis* and *De Synedriis et Praefecturis Juridicis Ebraeorum;* J. Spencer, *De Legibus Hebraeorum, etc.* 1685; and Eisenmenger, *Neuentdeckten Judenthume* 1702–1711.

the great Continental Hebraists.[1] To the high zeal and industry with which men like John Livingstone, Brown of Wamphray, Jamieson and Thomas Boston repeated the examples of learning afforded them by the first Reformers we owe the fact that a knowledge of both Greek and Hebrew has ever been required from candidates for the Scottish ministry. Nor did the Pilgrim Fathers fail to carry across the Atlantic the scholarly ideals of the early Puritans. The first schools of divinity in New England provided courses of study in the originals of both Testaments, besides an introduction to Syriac;[2] and a succession of competent teachers of Hebrew appeared down to the middle of the seventeenth century.[3]

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[1] *The Theology and Theologians of Scotland, chiefly of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, by James Walker, D.D., Carnwath, Edinburgh 1872; Lecture 1. John Livingstone, banished under Charles II., corrected the proofs for an edition of the Syriac New Testament; and revised the Latin text of the Old Testament, intending to print the Latin and Hebrew in parallel columns. His fellow-exile, Brown of Wamphray, had equal scholarship. Jamieson published *Spicilegia*, or notes on the connections between Bible history and the history of Greek and Latin authors. Above all Thomas Boston, who mastered Hebrew after he went to Ettrick, prepared a work on Hebrew accentuation, of a specimen of which Schultens and Grenobius said: 'On the supposition that the rest of this book is equal to this sketch it will, on the whole, be the best book that has been written on this subject.' To this period also belongs the series of commentaries edited by Dickson, including Hutchison on the Minor Prophets, Durham on the Song of Solomon, and Dickson himself on the Psalms.

[2] *New England's First Fruits*, London 1643.

[3] *Zeitschrift für A. T. Wissenschaft*, viii. (1888) 1 ff.; 'A. T.

In spite of the insight and erudition which distinguished the Old Testament scholarship and preaching of this period, these did not succeed in establishing the exegesis of Scripture upon sound principles, nor give to the Church a clear view of the development of revelation within Israel. We now perceive that their real value consisted in the indispensable preparation they provided for that modern criticism, which in the end of the eighteenth and throughout the nineteenth century has arranged the Old Testament upon historical lines and enabled the Church to trace the real history of Israel's religious development. The course of that criticism we have already followed in the Second Lecture, while its influence upon preaching has been appreciated in the beginning of this one.

We have been tracing the practical effects of a historical exegesis of the Old Testament on the preaching of the Christian Church. But our survey cannot be closed without a brief notice — all that our space permits — of the influence of the Old Testament upon the great succession of Christian treatises and arguments on government which forms an almost complete history of the political ideal from Constantine to the

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Studien in America,' by Prof. G. Moore of Andover. Cotton Mather records that even women studied Hebrew (*Magnalia*, iii. 23). Moore mentions besides Jonathan Edwards' *History of Redemption*, a MS. work by the great theologian on the Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament.

period before the French Revolution. Augustine's *De Civitate Dei;* Dante's *De Monarchia;* the political tracts of Luther and other Reformers; the political prefaces to Calvin's Commentaries and the chapter on Civil Government in his *Institutes;* the arguings of Knox with the statesmen of Queen Mary; Buchanan's *De Jure Regni apud Scotos;* his royal pupil's *Jus Liberae Monarchiae* and other lectures from the throne to a murmuring people; the *Royal Defence* of Salmasius; Milton's answer to it in the *Defence of the People of England;* Samuel Rutherford's *Lex Rex* — the list might be greatly extended but is sufficiently representative. In only a few of these do we find any real attempt to distinguish between what was permanently valid in Old Testament laws and institutions and what was of transient authority — with such success as we shall presently observe. In all the others, on both sides of the great controversy which runs through them, the eagerness of the disputants to claim every plausible precedent and sanction for their respective opinions is too warm to allow of historical discrimination. And therefore it is that in this series of works we feel most acutely what I have already said is conspicuous through the whole history of the Old Testament in the Christian Church — namely, the strangely varied character of the influence which the Hebrew Scriptures have exerted upon Christian ethics.

In the *De Civitate Dei*[1] Augustine distinguishes between the ideal and the actual in the kingdom of Israel. In fact, he says, it was a 'civitas terrena,' only in essence a 'civitas Dei.' However imperfectly Israel carried out the principles of the theocracy revealed to them, these principles remain a political standard and inspiration for all time, a perpetual pattern to the Christian State. The distinction is sound but vague: and Augustine had not the historic insight to apply it in detail. His allegorising interpretation only increased the vagueness of the distinction; and he left it to the mediæval Church with outlines so elastic as to permit the champions of the divine authority of the Papacy and of the Empire to find within the Old Testament example and sanction for even the most arrogant of their claims. Augustine himself was in the habit of appealing to the Old Testament in defence of rigorous measures by the State against heretics. The precedent he set was consistently followed by the Roman Inquisition.[2]

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[1] Books xv–xvii.

[2] Diestel (*Gesch. der A. T.* 152 f.) says that 'the whole conception by Charlemagne of the idea of the State shows many theocratic elements'; and refers to S. Rettberg, *Kirchengeschichte Deutschlands*. On p. 153 Diestel says: 'the Decalogue occurs in the laws of the Frisians.' It has been my duty for geographical purposes to go through the so-called *Assizes of Jerusalem*, the collection of legal works from the kingdoms of Jerusalem and Cyprus in the thirteenth century (ed. by Le Comte Beugnot in 2 vols. of the *Recueil des Historiens des Croisades*, Paris 1841 f.).

In *De Monarchia* Dante draws his proofs for a temporal power, universal in its sway, chiefly from the moralists of Greece and Rome. His claim for the Empire's independence of the Church, and for the derivation of its authority direct from God, is based on the character and history of the Roman people and on the providence of God in committing to them the government of the world. But he clinches his argument with the facts that the Son of God consented to be born into the Empire, and, by His submission to Pilate, as the executioner of His death for man's salvation, 'confirmed the jurisdiction of the Roman Empire over all mankind.' Dante quotes the Scriptures of the Old Testament far less frequently than the Pagan philosophies; and then chiefly by way of metaphor and parable. When he deals with them logically, it is never to claim for his thesis any sanction from their theocratic principles, but only to answer the arguments which the supporters of the supremacy of the Church have drawn from the precedence of Levi before Judah, or from the crowning and deposition of Saul by Samuel.[1] In this we meet with a contrast which we shall

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It is remarkable how this precipitate of feudalism in the East is devoid of religious argument and appeal. Almost the only imitation of legal tempers or processes, borrowed so lavishly by the Canon Law from the Old Testament, is the rigorous treatment of heretics.—*Livre de Jean d'Ibelin*, chap. cxc.

[1] Book iii. chaps. 5 and 6.

often see exemplified: between the defenders of the secular power who find their arguments in the New Testament, and the champions of the supremacy or independence of the spiritual power who chiefly appeal to the Old.

Before we pass from the Mediæval Church we ought to note the influence of one great doctrine of the Prophets upon the political ideals of the age. In the Eleventh Chapter of the Book of Isaiah and elsewhere the gifts of the Spirit of God are predominantly the qualities of just monarchs and wise counsellors. The Spirit was the Author of the Intellect, and more especially of the governing and political intellect: *the spirit of Jahweh, a spirit of wisdom and understanding, a spirit of counsel and might, a spirit of knowledge and of the fear of Jahweh:* in other words, ripeness but also sharpness of mind; moral decision and heroic energy; piety in its two forms of knowing the will of God and feeling the constraint to perform it. We could not have a more concise summary of the strong elements of a ruling mind;[1] and there is perhaps no passage in the Old Testament, which impressed itself more on the political and intellectual symbolism of the Mediæval Church. Using it to interpret Christ's promise of the Paraclete as the Spirit of Truth, the Church regarded the Holy Spirit, in the words of Gregory of Tours, as 'the God of the intellect more than of the heart.' On the painted glass of many European cathedrals the Dove is seen descending upon the heads of the doctors and councils of the Church or hovering over the figures of the sciences. Isaiah's description of the Lord's Anointed was employed at the coronation of kings and the fencing of tribunals of justice. It is evidently the model of the royal hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus*. In a Greek miniature of the tenth century the Sacred Dove hovers over King David, who displays the prayer: *Give the King Thy judgements, O God, and Thy righteousness to the King's son;* while there stand on either side of him the figures of Wisdom and Prophecy.[1] Henry the Third's order of knighthood, 'Du Saint Esprit,' was restricted to political men, and particularly to magistrates.[2]

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[1] See the present writer's *Isaiah i–xxxix.* in the *Expositor's Bible*, pp. 179–188, from which the above paragraph is mainly drawn.

From what has been said above of the difference between the Lutheran and Reformed Churches in their use of the Old Testament, it will be clear that fewer political ideas were taken from it by the former than by the latter. Luther uttered some sound sentences on the local and temporary authority of the Mosaic Law. 'We must and do reject and contemn those, that so highly boast of the rights and proceedings in Moses' Laws (*Judicialia*) in temporal affairs, for we have our Imperial and Countrie Laws under which we live and whereto we are sworn. . . . Moses' Laws bound and obliged only the Jews in that place which God made choice of. . . . Therefore let us recommend and leave Moses to his Laws, excepting only the *Moralia*, which God hath planted in Nature, as the Ten Commandments, which concern God's true worshipping and service, and a civil life.'[1] This is sound, but when Luther proceeds to depreciate the political teaching of the Prophets[2] as so much 'straw, hay and wood,' we feel an evil example, and are grateful to the founders of the Reformed Church that they did not propagate it. In his appeal to the *Christian Nobility of the German Nation*, Luther attacks the claims of the Papacy and Roman priesthood, which, as we have seen, were largely supported on Old Testament texts and instances. He has to prove the priesthood of all believers, and he does so naturally from the New Testament. Like Dante in the *De Monarchia*, he uses the Old Testament[3] to rebut the claim of the Church that the Emperor because crowned by the Pope must be subject to the latter. The exodus of Israel from

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[1] Didron, *Christian Iconography*, Eng. trans. i. 432.

[2] Cf. the Story of St. Dunstan related in Didron, *op. cit.* i. 426.

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[1] *Table Talk*, chap. xii., first paragraph, Capt. Henrie Bell's translation, 1652.

[2] See above, p. 243.

[3] For example, from the cases of Samuel and Saul, and Nathan and David: *An den Christlichen Adel Deutscher Nation.*

Egypt and her redemption from Babylon were to all the Reformers a type of the enfranchisement of the Church from the power of Rome.[1] In these cases the rights of the Church are the rights of the common people in face of their tyrants.

Calvin's *Institutes* are dedicated, with a prefatory address, to Francis King of the French; his commentary on Isaiah to Edward VI. of England; that on Jeremiah to the Elector Frederick; and that on the Minor Prophets to King Gustavus of Sweden. In these Prefaces Calvin points out that the monarch must labour for the word of God as essential to the welfare of his realm. He illustrates from the Old Testament that kings are the nursing fathers of the Church; and that the Church of the majority, as in France, is not necessarily the real Church of God: the true prophets were often opposed to the priesthood in Israel, to the kings, and to the bulk of the nation. It is the prophetical writings which are most worth the study of rulers: these should take as their example the few kings of Israel who were on the side of the prophets. Calvin treats of Civil Government in the last chapter of the *Institutes*. From both Testaments, but chiefly from the Old, he proves its lawfulness and its distinction from the spiritual kingdom of Jesus Christ. In God's providence all forms of government have been established, and it is impossible to say which is the best. Calvin himself prefers the aristocratic 'with curbs'; and notes that what God established in Israel was 'an aristocracy bordering on popular government.' To be successful a civil government must make piety and righteousness its first care: this is proved from Old Testament precepts, and principally from the Prophets. Can magistrates then shed blood? They must restrain crime and avenge the sufferings of the righteous: in certain cases they ought to go to war; and they have the right to levy taxes. With regard to laws Calvin is with Luther: the views of those 'who deny that any commonwealth is rightly framed which neglects the law of Moses' are 'stupid and false.' The judicial and ceremonial laws of the Old Testament were of passing authority. Only the moral law of God is binding on us: wherever national laws are framed after this rule, they should not be condemned by us. That Christians may appeal to magistrates and laws is proved from Paul's example and from some of his precepts. The righteousness of going to law in certain cases is argued in a most Christian and reasonable manner, very properly from the New Testament rather than from the Old, for it was in the former that the advocates of non-resistance in Calvin's time claimed to find the sanction for their opinion. From the Old Testament[1] Calvin curiously seeks to prove that tyrants are appointed of God, and that it is a Christian duty to obey them — except when they order us to do what God has expressly forbidden.

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[1] Cf. Luther's tractate on *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*, and Aurifaber's preface to the *Table Talk*, near the beginning.

Calvin emphasised from the Old Testament the duty of the civil magistrate to cut off the wicked. Unfortunately the Protestant Church too much imitated that of Rome in extending her vengeance to heretics and unbelievers; and upon both sides of the Atlantic appealed to the practice of the rulers of Israel in defence of their excommunication from civil rights of persons who differed from orthodox opinions, and in defence of the murder of witches.

In Great Britain, after the Reformation, the political influence of the Old Testament chiefly appears in the constant controversies between the Divine Right of Kings and the Rights of the People. The Scottish contributions to this argument are well represented by Knox's debate with Secretary Lethington and other statesmen of Queen Mary, by Buchanan's *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*, and by Rutherford's *Lex Rex*. Knox, in his arraignment of Queen Mary, had argued on the ground that the Law of Moses was binding on Christians. Where it decreed that idolaters should be put to death, Christians ought to apply it to those who institute or practise the mass. By accepting his Scriptural premises — they were unfortunately the common belief of the age — Lethington gave himself into Knox's hands. But Knox employed the Law of Moses less than he did the history of Israel. Here he found numerous precedents for the arraignment of sovereigns by God's prophets and for their punishment by the people. To statements by Calvin and others, that the Old Testament contained proofs of the lawfulness of even tyrannical governments and of the people's duty of obedience to them, Knox answered that Calvin had been arguing against the anarchical Anabaptists and he quoted instances of the overthrow of Jewish kings by the people because of idolatry. Knox's principal resource was thus Old Testament history; that of his opponents, on the contrary, was found among the New Testament precepts of obedience to an authority so tyrannical as that of the Roman Emperors. The same contrast appears in the use of Scripture in the dialogue *De Jure Regni apud Scotos*, between George Buchanan and his royalist opponent. The latter pleads Paul's commands to Christians to honour and pray for tyrants like Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero.[1] Buchanan has no difficulty in answering him upon New Testament principles; but it is from the history of Israel that he proves that kings ought to be punished for evil-doing by the authority which created them. In Israel that authority was God, in Scotland the people.[1]

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[1] 1 Sam. viii. 11–17, and Jer. xxvii. 5–8, 12.

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[1] § lxii.

The same contrast is again visible in the English forms of the controversy. Take a judicious advocate for the divinity of monarchy like Hooker,[2] or some preposterous ones like that redoubtable royal lecturer James the First, and like Sir Robert Filmer in his *Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings.* The persistence, with which they all seek to explain away their opponents' reasons from the Old Testament, proves that it was upon this part of Scripture that the champions of democracy still chiefly sharpened their weapons. In the first of his *Two Treatises of Government* John Locke has little difficulty in disposing of Filmer's ingenious arguments from Adam and the Kings of Israel; in doing so he exhibits the most reasonable treatment of Old Testament history — taking for granted its reality throughout — which the literature of Christendom had yet produced.

The contrast, which all those illustrated, might also be traced, if there were space, in the controversy between Salmasius and Milton, or in Rutherford's *Lex Rex;* and even through the divines of the Stuart and Hanoverian houses. Everywhere the advocates of the Divine Right of Kings relied upon New Testament texts — as Pilate's words to Christ, *I have power to crucify or release thee;* Paul's, *the powers that be are ordained of God;* Peter's, *the King as supreme.* Whereas the Scriptures, which, after the fashion of the times, popular champions like Milton and Rutherford preferred against them were chiefly drawn from the Old Testament; from the elections of Saul and David, their rebukes by Samuel and Nathan, the subjection of the king to the covenant, the part played by the people in the coronation and deposition of the kings, as well as from many passages of the Prophets. When we read such arguments, and remember that the Book from which they were drawn was in the hands and hearts of the common people, we appreciate how much of the liberty, which the period secured for us, is due to the Old Testament.

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[1] § lxii.

[2] Eighth Book of the *Ecclesiastical Polity.*

It is obvious that the distinction between the Old and New Testaments which this controversy emphasised, is no artificial one. The political circumstances of the two dispensations were entirely different. Through Old Testament history we follow the growth, the opportunities, the judgement of a nation. The purpose of God is a people; religious discipline and experience, religious duty and hope, are almost entirely identified with national rights and responsibilities, and the struggle for national liberty and national righteousness. But in the New Testament we do not deal with a nation at all. It is an exceptional state of affairs; in which religion neither is associated with popular struggles, nor assumes the responsibilities of government, but the sole political duty of the believer is reverence to the powers that be: the guardians of the Providential Peace in which the Church of Christ was to spread across the world. This is a state of affairs not so sympathetic with modern history as the other was; and therefore it is that in this province of religion the Hebrew Prophets have been felt by the moderns to stand nearer to them than the Apostles do. The Apostles were sojourners and pilgrims: the Prophets were citizens and patriots. It is a heavenly country to which the former look forward: the latter, as we have seen,[1] without any promise of the life to come, labour for the establishment of the kingdom of God within the conditions of their own national history. And for the same reason is it that the Old Testament — though of course upon a plane of public life different from that on which our forefathers applied it — must always have a function to discharge supplementary to the more glorious office of the Gospels and Epistles. As Maurice puts it, we must count 'paramount the duty of vindicating the Old Testament as the great witness for liberty . . . the witness of the sacredness of this earth.'[1]

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[1] Above, pp. 185 f.

We have already seen how the historical interpretation of the Prophets with which Modern Criticism provides us, renders more effective this practical application of them to the social ethics of our time.

## II. *The Political and Social Preaching of the Prophets.*

The rapid survey, which we have just made, of the influence of the Prophets upon the social ethics of Christendom, has shown us that the chief example to ourselves of their preaching to their own times lies in what may be called the double ethic of their patriotism: their faith in the essential sacredness of their national history and their conscience of their people's sins and duties.

The Prophets' treatment of their national history is instructive from more than one point of view. The facts which they quote from Israel's past are in agreement, so far as they go, with the witness of the historical Books; only the writers of the latter record a very great deal more, both of individual and national experience, than the Prophets deem necessary in order to exhibit the Divine meaning of that history. For instance, none of the eighth or the seventh century prophets lay stress upon the physical miracles which the historians of the early history of Israel record. They confine themselves to the political and ethical facts: the covenant between Jahweh and Israel, the redemption from Egypt, the guidance to Canaan, the overthrow of the heathen, the growth of ethical institutions and the inspiration of strong personalities.[1] I do not say that the Prophets were ignorant of what we call the miracles of the early history, or that they denied them. They had the stories of these before them,[2] and they believed the stories. But in preaching to their own generation they almost wholly confined themselves to the indubitable outlines of the early history and to its political and ethical significance. Now in such a selection by the first representatives of his office the preacher of to-day will find an example of the discrimination which he may show in the employment, for practical purposes, of the origin and the making of Israel. But what we are now concerned with is not so much the exact amount of the prophetic testimony to the early history of Israel as the fact that what the Prophets select from it for preaching to their own times, is just the kind of national memory and tradition by which every nation may prove the sacredness of its own career. To Amos nationality is what it was more explicitly to Cromwell and to Mazzini, a divine fact. *Have I not brought Israel out of the land of Egypt and the Philistines from Caphtor and Aram from Kir?*[1] All nations are by the calling and providence of Almighty God. What the Prophets saw in Israel's making is what every people with the Prophets' faith may see in their own past. 'The Bible of every nation is its history.'[2] 'What are all our histories but God manifesting Himself, that He hath shaken and tumbled down and trampled upon everything that He had not planted? . . We are a people that have had a stamp upon them from God . . whose appearances and providences among us are not to be outmatched by any story.'[3]

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[1] *Life*, ii., p. 490; cf. 4, 52, 454, etc.

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[1] So, for instance, in Amos ii. 9–11; cf. Hos. ii. 8, 14 ff. (Eng.) xi. 1 ff.; Isa. v. 1 ff.; Jer. ii.

[2] *E.g.* Amos iv. 11; Hosea xii. 3 ff.

As with the past of a nation, so with its future. Israel were the first of peoples to develop the sense of a spiritual mission to the world; and they did so not in the day of their strength, but in that of their weakness and servitude. Their Exile brought them into touch with many oppressed nationalities; and like their symbol, Jonah, on the helpless ship with the heathen sailors, they were made to feel their common humanity with the Gentiles whom they had despised. It was in this fellowship of suffering that, for the first time, they conceived their full mission to the ends of the earth : *I Jahweh have called thee in righteousness, and will hold thine hand and will mould thee, and give thee for a covenant of the peoples and for a light to the nations : to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison, and them that sit in darkness out of the house of bondage.*[1] The most comforting of all the promises uttered in connection with this world-wide mission is one whose tender words, though justly claimed for himself by every broken individual who turns to God, were principally intended for the weak and flickering nationalities threatened with extinction by the strong empires of antiquity.[2] *Behold my Servant . . . I have put my Spirit upon him . . . he shall bring forth justice to the nations. A bruised reed shall he not break, and the dimly burning flax shall he not quench ; he shall bring forth justice according to truth. He shall not fail nor be abashed till he have set justice on the earth ; and the isles shall wait for his teaching.*[3] To every modern people who have been conscious of their nationality as a Divine fact, and of their gifts and opportunities as a Divine call, this vision, granted first to Israel, has never failed.

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[1] Amos ix. 7.

[2] Carlyle.

[3] Cromwell, *Letters and Speeches*, by Thomas Carlyle, Speech IV. Cromwell called the Old Testament the 'recapitulation of Providence,' meaning God's providence not only of Israel but of all nations.

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[1] Isa. xlii. 6 f.

[2] See A. B. Davidson, *Expositor*, 2nd Series, viii. pp. 364 ff.

[3] *Ibid.* vv. 1–4.

Nor has it been less sure because, like the exiled Israel, a nation has grown weak and contemptible. While Italy was still divided and subject to many tyrannies, the despised of Europe and the mockery of her own past, her prophet, who almost alone believed in her restoration, dared to add to it a prophecy of her mission to the world.

National religion, then, according to the Prophets of Israel, is the recognition of God's hand in the nation's history; the acceptance of great ethical institutions and personalities as from His hand; the instinct and effort of moral progress; the sense of a mission to the world; the acknowledgment of the Divine calling of other nations; and sympathy in particular with such as are weak and oppressed. Such an ideal of religion the Prophets urged against two popular heresies: a non-ethical confidence in the national and established ritual; and a base 'other-worldliness' which sought in necromancy knowledge of the future and counsel for the present. To both of these the Prophets were inexorably hostile. For both were pagan. Both were founded on false ideas of God. And both withdrew the emphasis of religion from conduct and the national life. *I will have mercy and not sacrifice.*[1] *Though ye offer me your burnt offerings and your meat offerings I will not accept them; take thou away from me the noise of*

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[1] Hos. vi. 6.

*thy songs, I will not hear the melody of thy viols. But let justice roll down as waters, and righteousness as a perennial stream.*[1] *And when they shall say unto you: seek unto them that have familiar spirits, that chirp and mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? On behalf of the living* should they appeal *to the dead? To the Torah and the Testimony!*[2] — the Living Word which concerns itself with living men.

On those curiously sympathetic tendencies the Prophets' preaching has been justified by Christian experience. The rational and ethical elements of religion have always been imperilled by those errors: whose affinity has been proved not less by their similar effects than by their not infrequent alliance in the same persons or schools of religion.

The second quality of the Prophets' ideal of national religion is their strong conscience of their people's sins and civic duties. This is the harder and the more misunderstood half of patriotism. The ears of every people are open to the celebration of its history as divine, and even the baser hearts among it may be flattered by the idea of its mission to the world. But the true test of national religion is sensitiveness to the national sins. This was the test between the false and the true prophet in Israel; it is our test as preachers to our own day. Is our office servile to the pride and material interests of our nation? Or do we feel with trembling that the ethical element in patriotism is, in the strong tumult of all the others, the most easily neglected, and therefore the most in need of emphasis by a people's prophets. For its sake and God's the true patriot must sometimes run counter to the currents of popular enthusiasm, and be willing to incur the charges of treason to the commonwealth, and of cowardice in face of the national destiny. We have nothing to dread from that fear of kings which once made so many prophets false; but we have all the more to watch that we do not become flatterers of the common people. If we are to defend their rights, we must be brave to declare their sins; the offices of the Prophet and of the Demagogue are absolutely irreconcileable. To most preachers, however, such temptations as I describe arise not from the nation as a whole, but from the religious section of it to which they belong. There is danger that a man grow silent upon social ethics out of regard either to the ecclesiastical policy of his denomination, or to its financial interests. In all these forms the temptation to become a popular or fashionable preacher — whether the fashion be one of religious temper or of political opinion — is so subtle, and so many succumb to it, that, as we value the honour of our calling and are jealous of our loyalty to God, we ought persistently to steep ourselves in the just and stern spirit of our great forerunners.

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[1] Amos v. 22–24.

[2] Isa. viii. 19, 20.

To go into detail upon the subjects of the civic preaching of the Prophets would amount to an exposition of the larger part of the Books of Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, Micah and Jeremiah. Let these four general statements suffice. *First*, the careers of the Prophets were contemporaneous with the development of Hebrew society from an agricultural to a commercial condition, and with the rise of the City. The social evils, therefore, with which the Prophets deal, are those still urgent among ourselves.[1] *Second*, the Prophets, while inculcating, from God's treatment of the nation, tenderness and pity in the nation's treatment of their poor and enslaved, dwell with still greater emphasis upon the need of justice and equity. We enjoy a legal freedom and justice far beyond those of the Oriental society which the Prophets addressed; but no man can deny the frequent want of honour and equity among us in such social relations as are outside of the laws. *Third*, the Prophets, when enforcing religious observances and institutions, do so most frequently for social ends, or with regard to the interests of the poorer classes of the community.[2]

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[1] See *The Book of the Twelve Prophets*, i. ch. iii.

[2] *E.g.* The Sabbath: Amos viii. 5; Isa. lviii., cf. vv. 6 and 7 with 13 and 14.

And *fourth*, there is the emancipation of the individual from a *merely* national religion: the soul awaking to feel its solitary relation to God and its independence of the community only to discover a new duty and loyalty to the latter, that extends to the sharing of their sorrows and bearing of their sins — all the higher sense of individuality resulting in a truer altruism as we have already seen instanced in Jeremiah.[1] There could not be preaching more relevant to the conditions and temptations of our own life.[2]

All these features except the last might be illustrated from the works of almost every Prophet, and they are equally conspicuous in the codification of prophetic teaching, which we find in Deuteronomy. In this great system of national religion the domestic and the civic duties are enforced in no legal spirit; but with the high morality and full tenderness of the prophetic temper. There are few of the rites and institutions of a nation — the Sabbath, Sacrifice, Prophecy, the sustenance of the Priesthood, Justice, the Monarchy, War, Agriculture, Trade, and Money — which are not defined by Deuteronomy with special regard for *the poor among thy brethren : the widow, the orphan, the slave and the stranger within thy gates.* And the sum of the whole is not love to God alone, but love to God and man. *Hear, O Israel, thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart and all thy soul and all thy strength, and thy neighbour as thyself.*

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[1] Above, pp. 165 ff.

[2] There is a fine passage by the great philanthropist Lord Shaftesbury on the civic teaching of Jeremiah (*Life* by Hodder, iii. 454): 'If for political and public purposes there can be in the Bible one book more valuable than another to throw light on the days we live, it is Jeremiah. He was not always "looking to the sun," but he was looking to the earth, entreating, preaching, warning, threatening, promising; and he was in consequence regarded as a bore and a blunderer. Yet if he had been attended to, Jerusalem might have survived for many centuries; and certainly she would have been spared the indescribable sufferings of soul and body that followed her destruction by Nebuchadnezzar.'

### III. *Other Features of the Preaching of the Prophets.*

Passing now from the civic to other features of the Prophets' preaching to their own times, we must not omit to notice one, which is not only historically remarkable in the religious leaders of a Semitic people, but of some practical interest to ourselves. I mean the attitude of the Prophets to what we call miracles.

When St. Paul defined the contrast between the Greek and the Jewish minds in the words: *the Jews require a sign : and the Greeks seek after wisdom,*[1] he struck a characteristic of the whole race to which the Jews belong. The Semites have always been notorious for unwillingness to receive moral truth upon its own evidence and without the attestation of some physical wonder — not necessarily of a kind akin to the truth which it was supposed to confirm. Wellhausen has remarked this quality in the early stories of Pagan Arabs;[1] and to this day 'miracles,' so far from being a difficulty to catechumens of the Christian religion in Damascus or Cairo, are regarded by them as indispensable concomitants of the Divine Word. We all know that it was not otherwise in Israel. The Old Testament contains a number of stories according to which the Word of God was accompanied with signs following, and these signs were not always like the beneficent miracles of our Lord, consonant in character to the message with which they were associated.[2] It was a recognised thing in Israel that when a prophet arose he should give the people a sign or wonder. And Christ Himself describes this attitude of the nation's mind in the words (not without reproach), *Except ye see signs and wonders, ye will not believe.*[3]

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[1] 1 Cor. i. 22.

All the more striking, therefore, is the absence from the teaching of the Prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries of all miracles in the technical sense of the word, and of all appeal to miracle.[4] This absence is complete except for the single and very ambiguous offer by Isaiah of a sign to the obdurate Ahaz.[1] Now such a silence on 'miracles' was not due to the Prophets' disbelief. The Prophets shared the faith of their time in the possibility of miracles, and in the stories of their ancient history which recorded 'miracles.' The true explanation is given in the Book, which is a summary of the prophetic doctrine on the rites and institutions of Israel. The thirteenth chapter of Deuteronomy takes for granted the power *to give signs and wonders* on the part of any *prophet or dreamer of dreams.* But it denies that signs and wonders, however real, can attest the prophet's message as the word of God. This message must be judged by its own character. If it tempts to idolatry, its prophet is a false prophet and must be put to death, notwithstanding whatever miracles he may have worked. God can have permitted these, only to test His people's loyalty. This is the explanation of the abstinence from appeal to miracle which distinguishes the great writing prophets. They will have their message travel in the greatness of its own strength: prove itself Divine on the credit of the high religion and morality which are its substance, and be vindicated by the historical events which it brings to pass. Does it reveal the will of God? *Jahweh God does nothing, but He* first *revealeth His secret to His servants the prophets.*[2] Does the prophet's message of God

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[1] *Reste arab. Heidentumes*, p. 131.

[2] *E.g.* the signs which Moses gave on his first mission to Pharaoh in presence of the King.

[3] John iv. 48.

[4] I speak now of the discourses of the Prophets and not of the narratives appended to them.

[1] Isaiah vii.

[2] Amos iii. 7.

agree with God's revelation of Himself in history? Two men cannot come together except by previous appointment:[1] the harmony of the prophetic word with the divine deed is the proof of a purpose common to both. Does the word produce and mould that which it predicts? Then it is divine: *it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please and it shall prosper* in the thing *whereto I sent it.*[2] It is thus never to 'miracle,' in the narrow sense of that term, that the Prophet appeals as the proof of his message, but to history. Political facts now within his people's ken, or shortly to come to pass — by these he is content to be judged.[3] He asserts his power of prediction: he makes predictions which are fulfilled. Yet he does so not through any magic vision of the future, but by inference from the religious principles with which God has inspired him, and by application of these to the political circumstances and probabilities of his own time. This I have elsewhere illustrated in detail by a review of Isaiah's predictions concerning the deliverance of Jerusalem.[4]

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[1] Amos v. 3. On this whole passage see *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, i. pp. 82, 89 f.

[2] Isaiah lv. 11.

[3] As for example, Isaiah when asserting the inviolableness of Jerusalem: or the great Prophet of the Exile when he proves the divine origin of earlier predictions of the end of the Exile by their fulfilment in the victorious progress of Cyrus against Babylon.

[4] *Isaiah i–xxxix.* ch. xxiv.

To me this independence of 'signs and wonders,' when we place it in contrast to the universal custom of Semitic soothsayers and the common expectancy of all Israel, is but another proof of the divinity of the Prophets' teaching. Miracles, as Christ Himself has shown us, may be given to attest a Divine Revelation, but they are not necessary to the highest faith; and in the case of the Prophets their absence is a stronger seal, than their presence would have been, of the Divine origin of prophecy.

We have seen[1] that, in appealing to the presence of God in the history of their people, the prophets of the eighth and seventh centuries selected as its evidences not so much the record of physical marvels which it contained, as the clear lines of religious guidance, political growth and moral inspiration. In the same fashion they treated the history of their own times; and saw the Divine not so evidently in its exceptions and catastrophes of natural order, as in its gradual development through political events and ethical issues to the manifest judgements of God. To them Jahweh is a God of law and order: and they delight, as Isaiah does, to reveal Him in the great commonplaces of experience and to illustrate the regularity of His methods in history by the regularity of His methods in nature.[2] Thus, whether in the ethical or in the physical sphere, we find their conception of Him to be that of *Mishpat;* according to Isaiah He is *El Mishpat*, the God who works by principle and law. And it is this, their instinct and conviction of seeing the Divine in process rather than in interruption, in law rather than in 'miracle,' in method rather than in catastrophe, which makes them appear so modern and which undoubtedly engages for them the intellectual as well as the moral sympathies of the present day.

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[1] Above, pp. 265 f. [2] See especially Isaiah xxviii. throughout.

But it is time to pass from the doctrines of those preachers who are our own greatest standards and examples, and to consider the living aids which they contribute to the style and the temper of preaching. Schleiermacher is the only great preacher of the century who would have nothing to do with the Old Testament, judging it to stand to Christianity in the same relation as Paganism does. 'For our ethics,' he says, 'the Old Testament is entirely superfluous.' We perceive the historical injustice of such a view; but Dr. John Ker has also remarked its evil effect upon Schleiermacher himself as a preacher. 'One cannot but see that Schleiermacher's style has suffered from his neglect of the Old Testament.' How much of force and charm, of passion and of poetry, have all other great preachers derived from the Hebrew Scriptures! An old German writer has said that 'Holy Writ should be our grammar and our dictionary, out of which all the moods of Christian speech should grow.' The advice is sound, if we fulfil it not in the pedantry of the letter[1] but in the spirit: not in the servile and barren repetition of Bible texts whether in preaching or praying; but in the imitation of those tempers and affections which mould the style of the sacred writers, and of that labour which they put forth upon their art. What may our preaching not learn from the Prophets as to conciseness: as to the worth of phrase; as to concreteness in our teaching; as to the use of the circumstance and events of our ordinary life; as to the use of nature and history; as to the duty of calling things by their right names; as to the effort to bring grace and music into what we say; as to the urgency which is upon all living truth and the passion to win men which is the heart of preaching. What preacher, who is a student of the Old Testament, can fail to be infected by the courage of the Prophets, and by their downright realism[2] — a courage and realism which are frequently disguised in our English version: but the careful student of the original discovers them, and they thrill him to the heart. Do not believe that the end of an accurate study of the Hebrew language is simply familiarity with a number of grammatical forms more or less obscure. Painstaking students are otherwise rewarded. It is they who lay their hands on the prophet's heart and feel it beat; it is they who across the ages see the very features of his face as he calls; it is they into whom his style and his music pass.

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[1] As for instance Mohammedans base the sciences of Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic and Poetry wholly upon the Koran.

[2] 'Truth is what this people first require, and therefore the revelation of the Lord will in the first instance be the revealing of the truth. Men who will strip pretence off the reality of things; men who will call things by their right names; honest satirists and epigrammatists — these are the bearers of God's revelation. For it is one of the means of Divine salvation to call things by their right names, and even in God's revelation epigrams have their place.' — On Isaiah xxx.: p. 226 of *Isaiah i–xxxix.* (*Expositor's Bible*).

But the ultimate fountain of the prophetic preaching is the passion to win men. This is the secret both of the pathos and the splendours of its style. To the Prophets preaching was no mere display, but a sore battle with the hard hearts of their contemporaries, in which the messenger of the Lord worked with the pity of his weakness upon him, at a supreme cost to himself and conscious that he must summon to his desperate task every resource of feeling and of art. *Go and tell this people: Hear ye indeed but understand not: and see ye indeed but perceive not. The harvest is past, the summer is ended, and we are not saved. Is there no balm in Gilead and no physician there? Why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered? Then I said, I will not make mention of Him nor speak any more in His Name. Yet it is in mine heart* *as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I weary myself to hold it in but cannot stay. Comfort ye, comfort ye my people, saith your God: speak upon the heart of Jerusalem, and cry unto her that her warfare is accomplished, that her iniquity is pardoned. The Voice said, Cry; and I said, 'What shall I cry? All flesh is grass and all the goodliness thereof is as the flowers of the field.' The grass may wither, the flower fade, but the Word of our God shall stand for ever.*

# LECTURE VIII

## THE CHRISTIAN PREACHER AND THE BOOKS OF WISDOM

We have now reached the last department of our survey, that group of writings which are known as the Books of Wisdom — Job, Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. Here as elsewhere in the Old Testament, the Christian preacher has questions of historical criticism to encounter. But either the answers, which modern critics offer to these questions, are now generally accepted by the common sense of Christians, — as for instance the ideal interpretation of the Book of Job and the date of Ecclesiastes. Or else the questions themselves, where still unanswered, have little relevance to the practical use of the writings — as for example the integrity of the two Books just named. In the literature of Hebrew Wisdom, the difficulties of the preacher arise rather from problems that are religious. The presence in these Scriptures of doubt and speculation, of revolt against views of Providence presented in other Scriptures; of indifference to those national aspects of Israel's religion, in which the essence of Prophecy lies; and of an ethical teaching which is apparently utilitarian —such are the problems which beset a Christian's use of the Books of Wisdom. We shall best approach the solution through a study of the school of religious teachers out of which the Books took their rise.

We have already seen that in the Providence of God a large part of the development of Israel's religion was achieved through the conflict and mutual reaction of two religious schools or tempers — the Prophetic and the Priestly. Now besides these two, which between them represent the growth of the national religion up to the Exile, there was a third class or guild, that of the Wise Men, definite enough, as early as Jeremiah's time, to be named along with the Priests and the Prophets.[1] Before the Exile they are not mentioned so frequently as the latter, and Jeremiah appears to speak of them with impatience, and as if they were hostile to the prophetic word.[2] Yet they worshipped Jahweh, and are described as claiming to have his Torah or *Revelation* with themselves. They are not charged with idolatry, nor with magic and soothsaying. The opinion is therefore probable, that they were men of influence who took no part in the strife between the Prophets and the rest of Israel, but who found their interests and activities in the sphere of practical morals.[1] By more than one modern they have been called the Humanists of Israel. Such men could bide their time. Whatever their attitude to the Prophets had originally been, as the teaching of the latter survived the conflicts of the generations to whom it first appeared, and as its principles became an accepted part of the national religion, the Wise Men would assimilate from it those elements — and they were not few — which were most in harmony with their own religious temper: such as the main doctrines of monotheism, the ethical reasonableness of God's judgements, the immutableness of His laws both in nature and history. When the succession of the Prophets came to an end; that is to say, when Israel ceased to enjoy the political freedom and responsibility which were the indispensable occasion of the Prophet, and developed into a vehicle of religious truth through the centuries, then the Wise Men came to their kingdom. Their didactic temper, their instinct for handing down the experience of the past to the rising generation, found its opportunity. But they could not remain mere teachers and traditionalists. The body of religious experience and doctrine, which they accumulated, of itself raised questions, in face especially of the defeat and suffering which Israel's faith encountered from her Babylonian and Persian lords. And as time went on there shot across it new lights from alien religions, with which the Jews in their great Diaspora came into contact. Breezes, not always the healthiest, blew upon Judaism from abroad. Doubt, question, research and even revolt became inevitable. The Wisdom of Israel grew speculative and even defiant, as well as didactic and traditional.

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[1] Jer. xviii. 18.

[2] *Ibid.* viii. 8; ix. 22; xviii. 18.

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[1] Cf. Wildeboer, *Lit. des A. T.*, p. 367.

We cannot state the development of Hebrew Wisdom in a form less vague; we are without the data for an exact history. It is possible to give the stages of the growth of the Law of Israel; it is not possible to give those of the growth of Israel's Wisdom. The mass of it seems to be post-exilic. Ecclesiastes is undoubtedly late,[1] the Prologue to the Proverbs cannot be much earlier, and the Book of Job may spring from any date between the Exile and 300 B.C. Yet the last-named is at least founded on a pre-exilic tradition,[2] it is possible that several of the collections of the Book of Proverbs were complete before the Exile, and very probable that they contain sayings from the earlier life of the people.[3]

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[1] The language appears the latest of all the Old Testament, while the political conditions which it reflects are those of the end of the Persian, or beginning of the Greek, Period. Ecclesiastes is now generally referred to the third century B.C.

[2] Ezek. xiv. 14.

[3] See A. B. Davidson, 'Proverbs' in *Encyclopædia Britannica*,

The character of the teaching of the Wise may be more clearly defined in comparison and in contrast with that of the Prophets. I said that the Wise, whatever may have been their original attitude to the Prophets, assimilated in time the elements of the prophetic monotheism. But it is possible to say more than this, for in truth the origins of *every* tendency which Hebrew Wisdom developed after the Exile are to be found in Hebrew Prophecy before the Exile. Does the Book of Proverbs count *knowledge* as the essence of virtue? Even in Hosea the Prophets had been laying emphasis upon the duty of *knowing* God in His character and purposes for men;[1] and *knowledge* forms one of the bases of the doctrine of Deuteronomy. Do the authors of the Book of Proverbs enjoin and practise the systematic teaching of the young? The authors of Deuteronomy had already shown them the example. Moreover, some of the Prophets, as for instance Isaiah in the close of Chapter xxviii., discourse in the very style of the Wise Men; that is, by parable and epigram, with shrewd and gnomic phrases; and seek to illustrate the wisdom of Providence by the wisdom of the Divine processes in nature. In

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ninth ed.; but on the other side Toy's Introduction to *Proverbs* in the *International Scientific Commentary*.

[1] This prophetic preparation for the Wise Men's theory of knowledge has been overlooked by Professor Toy; see his Introduction to *Proverbs*, p. xvi.

almost every prophet there is a sense of the unity of the Reason which pervades all things ; it becomes more and more articulate from Amos, through Isaiah, though the writer who added to the Book of Amos the famous apostrophes to the creative power of Jahweh,[1] and through Jeremiah, to the great Prophet of the Exile. These, and no Greeks, were the teachers of him who wrote the great psalm of Wisdom in the Eighth of Proverbs. Even for the processes of speculation and of doubt which they carried to such daring degrees, the Wise found precedents in the experience of some of the most constructive of the Prophets. Job's challenges to the Almighty are partly anticipated by the bold questions of Jeremiah ; and in Habakkuk we perceive the beginnings of that scepticism of faith with its solution in patient endurance of wrong and loyalty to God — *Watch for the Vision for it shall come and shall not tarry, now the just man shall live by his faithfulness* — which we feel at the heart not only of Job, but of Ecclesiastes.[2] In their interests and in their doctrines the Wise were the Prophets' heirs.

And yet though they thus inherit from the Prophets many sympathies and even doctrines, the Wise Men differ from the Prophets in the style, temper and standpoint of their genius. The gift of the Prophet is vision, but the genius of the Wise Man is experience born of insight and observation. Both insist upon Law and declare what must be. But while the Prophets for the most part look forward and tell the people what shall come to pass because God has such a character and such a purpose, the Wise Men look back and tell what shall come to pass because under God it has always been. Both insist upon righteousness. But while the Prophets look forward to those ideals of justice and mercy which have never yet been fulfilled on earth, the Wise Men feel beneath them the great commonplaces of moral reward and retribution, which actually work themselves out in the experience of men. And so (as a rule) while the Prophet is passionate, the Wise Man is shrewd. While the Prophet calls to swift warfare for God, the Wise Man speaks of the slow discipline of life, with its results in wisdom, counsel and 'cunning.' There are, of course, exceptions. Many of the Prophets, as we have seen, illustrate the results of wisdom in the ordinary politics of their day, and sometimes employ the Wise Men's style of writing. Two at least of the Wise Men, the poet who composed the eighth chapter of Proverbs, and the religious genius who gave us the Book of Job, have all the Prophet's gift of vision. But in the main the two classes are distinct — as distinct as the temper of hope is from the temper of experience.

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[1] *Book of the Twelve Prophets*, i. pp. 201 ff.; ii. p. 8, n. 5.

[2] *Ibid.* pp. 136, 140 ff.

Again, the scope of their respective interests was not the same. The Prophets have set to them the task of winning Israel's faith for the unity of God; but for the Wise that faith is won, and they take it for granted. The Prophets have to combat idolatry; but by the Wise the idols are ignored as if they had never existed. It is an agony to the Prophets to establish the righteousness and wisdom of God; with the Wise Men these are an axiom. A great deal of this difference must have been a difference of epoch, and of the historical tasks lying respectively to their minds. The passion of the Prophets arose from their being watchmen and even martyrs for truth not yet accepted by the conscience of the people; the more quiet temper and methods of the Wise were due to the fact that the common sense of Israel acknowledged the principles from which they worked. The one class are a body of men wrestling with their contemporaries; the other a body of teachers directing their younger disciples. About the former is all the eagerness of the dawn; the latter have on them something of the placidity of the afternoon. Nay, round one at least of the Wise Men the twilight has already fallen; and Ecclesiastes gropes among deeper shadows than those from which the morning star of prophecy at first arose. Yet to this distinction also there is an exception, for Job contends with his contemporaries as valiantly as Jeremiah. With him the Spirit of prophecy beats, and breaks away from the conventional religion of Israel as powerfully as with Amos or Isaiah. It was a right instinct, therefore, which led the early Church to count Job among the Prophets.

Again, the Prophets, as we have seen,[1] were intensely national. You remember what patriots Isaiah and Jeremiah were; how in particular they loved their own Jerusalem; and how clear to us her aspect shines in many of their visions. We see her walls, her public places, her housetops. We are admitted to the intrigues of her political parties, her throne-chamber, her Temple. We can trace the march of foreign foes through the land, see the trails of fire and smoke they leave behind them, and hear them speaking across the walls of the capital with its timid defenders. And these are but instances of the particular and national temper of the Prophets. Throughout it is God's love for Israel and Israel's destiny in the world on which they delight to dwell. But all this patriotism and noise of running history are absent from the Books of Wisdom. It is probable indeed that the secular sorrows of Israel are reflected in the sufferings of Job.[2] But neither there nor in the Book of Proverbs is Israel or Judah or Jerusalem once

[1] Lecture VII.

[2] Davidson's Introduction to Job, *Cambridge Bible*, p. xix. f.

mentioned. The author of Ecclesiastes takes Solomon, *King in Jerusalem*, only as a type of the particular aspect of Wisdom, which he illustrates. Except in the titles of the Book of Proverbs no monarch is named, no country and no city. Politics are indeed discussed: the wilful ways of kings and the fickleness of the crowd. The Wise Man speaks everywhere from the midst of the people. There are descriptions of the life and scandals of a great city: its drunkards, its scorners, its simple youths and public temptresses: more vivid than in any prophet. But all is human and universal. Those streets so full of temptations; those corners with their scoffers and sots; those gamblers and wantons; those oppressed poor whose oppression is their poverty — they are not only Jerusalem. To-day they are Vienna, and Paris and London and New York. Into his description of Job's disease the poet may have wrung the sufferings of Israel; but what the patriarch deplores is the human commonness of his fate, and it is by the strength of a man's conscience that he throws out his challenges in the face of the Almighty. Thus the preacher may work through the Books of Wisdom, finding only the immutable elements of human experience in sin and sorrow, the brevity of life and the certainty of death, the inevitableness of doubt and the conflict of faith with stern facts.

In dealing with the separate Books and their value to the Christian preacher, I have time only to make a few general statements concerning Job and Ecclesiastes, and then to give a summary of the teaching of the Book of Proverbs.

There are three practical uses of the Book of Job which must be remembered in connection with the purpose of these lectures. (1) The Book is the supreme instance of the neglected truth that Revelation is not confined to literal history. (2) It is an illustration of the uses of religious doubt and revolt. And (3) it is a fine discipline for pastors in the treatment of hearts racked by experience, and by the inevitable conflict of faith with the facts of life.

(1) The Book of Job is anonymous. The name of the hero, the fame of his piety, and perhaps also the nature of his trials, are founded on tradition;[1] but since Luther the growing and now accepted opinion of Protestant scholars[2] is that the Book is not literal history — 'Job spake not in that sort as in the Book is written, for it is not easy [? possible] in tribulation and temptation to speak after that manner'[3] — but is the ideal

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[1] Ezek. xiv. 14.

[2] See any good introduction to the Book of Job, *e.g.* Professor Davidson's in the *Cambridge Bible for Schools*. The opinion that Job was not an actual man but 'a parable' was held by early Jewish scholars. See the tradition of this in the Talmud, 'Baba Bathra,' 15.

[3] Luther, *Table Talk*, chap. xxxi., Captain Henrie Bell's translation.

presentation, by one of the greatest poets whom the world has ever known, of the experience of innocent suffering, of the conflict of its conscience with orthodox religious explanations, of the doubts and defiance which it excites, and of their only possible solution in personal trust and submission to God — 'he had by himself such cogitations: it fell out and happened so indeed as is written.'[1] There is no Book of the Old Testament in which the 'minor authenticities'[2] are of such little account in comparison with the magnificent genuineness of the experience which the Book contains. Is it silent about its author? It holds itself almost equally aloof from all questions of its foundation on the facts of any single life. It deals with the perennial problem of Israel's faith, the suffering of the righteous. It exposes, explodes and dissipates the obdurate superstition (which even Christ had to combat[3]), that suffering and adversity always mean punishment, and that such an explanation of them is the only means of vindicating God's righteousness. If for this the Book provides no substitute in a positive, explicit doctrine of suffering, it at least clears the ground for such a doctrine, as that appeared even under the Old Testament,[4] and was consummated in the Cross of Christ. Meanwhile it supplies in the most divine, because the most gentle and natural manner, new inspiration to patience, loyalty and hope, with the constant proof that suffering endured in these tempers lifts the mind to a stronger and more original hold upon God Himself. No man can deny that this is, in the truest sense of the word, a revelation, with its own indispensable function in the preparation for Christ. And it is presented in the form of a drama of religious experience, which, though in revolt against the orthodox dogmas of the day, is yet absolutely fair to these by drawing the characters of their representatives so as to bring out all the good that is in them; and which in itself is wonderfully vivid, sincere and real. Before such divine doctrine and true human experience, questions about the 'literal' history of the Book are felt to be impertinences; and we acknowledge the truth — so significant for the interpretation of other Scriptures[1] — that Revelation is not coincident with the bare letter of actual facts, but may be conveyed to us, in its highest substance, through the ideal presentation of these by an inspired artist or poet.

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[1] *Ibid.*

[2] Compare above, p. 172.

[3] Luke xiii. 2; cf. John vii.

[4] Isaiah xl–lv., Prov. iii. 11, 12.

(2) It has been a trouble to some that processes and results, so full of the doubt and contradiction of principles affirmed by other Scriptures, should ever have been regarded as of equal divinity with these, and admitted into

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[1] See above, p. 74, 89, 107 f.

the Canon of the Jewish or of the Christian Church. Let me only point out that no narrow theories of inspiration can account for this — men are able to hold such theories only by ignoring it[1] — but to an open mind it is the proof of guidance in the growth and selection of the Scriptures by a Spirit with standards and sympathies very much wider than the standards or sympathies of any single school of religious belief. In the Old Testament Books of speculative and experimental Wisdom we see the same condescendence on the part of God as we see in the rudimentary stages of the history.[2] His Spirit sympathises with His children's rude and painful struggles after light; with their discontent with the earlier achievements of religion, and with their revolts against ancient dogmas. Moreover, it rewards the rebel by the gift of new aspects of truth, and by guidance to firmer and more original faith in God. Therefore, so far from these passages of argument and of doubt, which the Scripture contains, being less evangelical than the prophecy and history, they also are proofs of Grace: the seeking and the saving of them that have wandered or are lost. Let me quote to you the fine words of one who has done more than any other teacher of our day for the spiritual understanding of the Book of Job: — 'The revealing Spirit was in a certain sense an indwelling Spirit, uniting Himself intimately with all the highest affections and noblest aspirations of the men whose mind he illuminated. And these men were not persons, who stood as mere objective instruments to be addressed; they were of the people. Every feeling of the people, every movement of life at its lowest stratum, sent its impulse up to them; every hope or fear was reflected in their heart: and with all these movements and reflected emotions . . . the Spirit of Revelation, which was not a Spirit of knowledge merely but of life, sympathised and, if the word can be used, coalesced. The people of Israel as the Church of God lived a profound life; in its outstanding men that life was at its profoundest and broadest; and as at the first the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters that covered the earth, so He moved upon that unquiet sea of the Church's mind, agitated with emotions, with presentiments, with fears, with speculations, and out of them all brought more perfect forms of truth.'[1]

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[1] It is too little noticed that the advocates of a verbal inspiration of Scripture (or of kindred theories) have to reckon not only with the discrepancies of fact in the Old Testament, but with the presence in it of opposite religious tempers; and of the contradiction by some Books of the teaching in others.

[2] See above, p. 143 f.

(3) The third lesson for the practical preacher, which I have promised to show in the Book of Job, concerns his attitude towards religious

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[1] A. B. Davidson.

doubt and revolt when these shall draw to him for counsel. The speeches of Job's friends ought to be studied by every man who proposes to make the guidance and consolation of his fellow-men, in their religious interests, the duty of his life. For these speeches are, every one of them, lessons both in how, and how not, to discharge that delicate and responsible office. The writer of the Book of Job is thoroughly fair to the traditional views of which it is his aim to show the insufficiency. He represents them by men of honesty, and even at first of courtesy, who take up their task in the sincere desire to help Job out of all his troubles. In particular we have much to learn from the approach of Eliphaz the Temanite to his afflicted friend. But the author shows how all the three comforters of Job misunderstand the heart; how little they have fathomed human experience; how easily worn out are their love and patience; how they prefer to vindicate their own views of God to saving the soul of their brother; and how above all they commit the sin of not perceiving that God Himself may be working directly on that brother's heart, and purposes to teach them more than they can ever teach him. Love was what he looked for and trust: but they gave him argument which for a time only drove him the further from God. You remember what he says:

> *To him that is ready to faint kindness is due*
> *from his friend,*
> *Even to him that is forsaking the fear of the*
> *Almighty.*[1]

There is doubt about the true reading; but none can mistake the meaning. And yet how ignored this great verse has been! How different were the history of religion if men had kept it in mind! How much sweeter and swifter would the progress of Christianity have proved! The physicians of religious perplexity have too often been Job's comforters; and the souls in doubt, who should have been gathered to the heart of the Church with as much pity and care as the penitent or the mourner, have been scorned or cursed, or banished or even put to death.

But it must be evident to every reader that, freely as the Wise Men speculated, they never regarded speculation as an end in itself, or even as a means by itself. They held it impossible to separate thinking from the practice of life, and in a remarkable degree foreshadowed the statement of Christ: *if any man will do His will he shall know of the doctrine.* Practical life was not only their starting-point. It was the return and refuge of all their thought. If they were baffled in their search for knowledge that did not paralyse their wills. Duty was plain. The difference between right and wrong was plain. God Himself was past doubt in His character of Lawgiver and Judge. *Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter: fear God and keep His commandments, for this is the* duty *of every man.*[1]

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[1] vi. 14.

But that brings us to the Book in which the practical and didactic Wisdom of the Old Testament is most fully set forth.

### *The Book of Proverbs.*

Mr. Ruskin tells us that in the Bible of his boyhood he preserved till old age the list of chapters which his mother gave him to commit to memory. 'With this list thus learned, she established my soul in life. And truly, though I have picked up the elements of a little further knowledge in mathematics and meteorology and the like in after life, and owe not a little to the teaching of many people, this maternal installation of my mind in that property of chapters, I count very confidently the most precious and on the whole the one essential part of all my education.'[2]

In the inventory of a property so splendidly appraised we find four chapters of the Book of Proverbs — the second, third, eighth and twelfth. And I suppose that to the generation of Ruskin's father and to his own generation, the Book of Proverbs proved a necessary part of a religious education. That they are cast in the oldest and most simple form of tradition — for, as the Easterns say, some are born and some die, and the old tell the young what they know; that they are addressed from a serene age to youth which has not lost its faith or its absoluteness; that they say nothing of the intricacies or the qualifications of middle manhood; that they echo almost no accents and reflect few lights of any particular period of history; that their instances are drawn from the essential human experiences and their humour and wit are those of the common people — it is this which has given the Proverbs of Israel their wide popularity and caused their employment in the education of so many races.

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[1] Ecclesiastes xii. 13.

[2] *Praeterita*, i. 57.

But of late years the Book of Proverbs appears to have become neglected in the education of the young. It may be that in the more spiritual temper which religion has assumed in our time and in our quickened, because better informed, love of the historical and prophetical Scriptures — the one with its romance, the other with its lofty ideals — there has been a tendency to revolt against the alleged Utilitarianism of the Proverbs; just as there has been a revolt against the legalism of other Scriptures which used to play a greater part in education than they now do, I had believed this feeling to be more an instinct than an articulate conviction, till the other day, when the leading English weekly gave to it a very definite expression. The article I speak of described the temper of the Book of Proverbs to be one which not only does not commend itself to the mind of youth; but which it is our duty to keep away from the young, as a prudential and a sordid temper, laying stress upon the consequences of character rather than upon its essential rightness and beauty, enforcing virtue more because of the rewards she can bestow than for her own authority. This charge may be confidently met by two assertions. In the first place it is impossible to teach the folly of evil without pointing to its consequences; and secondly, the Book of Proverbs does not limit itself to this primary stage of morality but, as we shall presently see, enforces Virtue for her own sake, paints Wisdom with an essential worth and beauty, and appeals quite as much to the generous affections and enthusiasm of youth as to their prudence and common sense.

The Book consists of eight unequal parts — a Prologue on the whole subject of Wisdom: one continuous and rhythmical address occupying the first nine chapters; then from Chapters x. to xxix. four collections, great and small, of proverbs proper, popular sayings lying loose, for the most part, without arrangement as to subject or style; then in Chapter xxx. a number of enigmatic or numerical proverbs in a more or less artificial form; then the warning of a mother to her son against women and wine; and finally the incomparable eulogy of the Virtuous Woman, in which *virtuous* is to be taken in its older and nobler sense of strength and bravery; but strength and bravery exercised within the home.

Now with regard to the collections of Proverbs proper, the bulk of the Book, it has been one great drawback to their use that for the most part they were not gathered by their ancient editors into groups corresponding to their subjects. The first duty of the reader or teacher who would feel the full volume of their wisdom, and all its various shrewdness, is to make such a grouping for himself.[1] Education, Friendship, Marriage, Religion; God the Maker of all; Morality and Religion as one; God's interest in the little things of conduct; God as the searcher of hearts, and the rewarder of virtue; God and the King; God and the Poor; Equality of all men before God; or Sin: its deceitfulness and its ruin of the character, of the joy and of the freedom of life; or such subjects as the giving and taking of reproof, sins of the tongue; idleness, anger, poverty and riches, the value of substance in life, sorrow and comfort — gather the Proverbs under these and other heads, and for the first time you will appreciate the resource, the sanity, the humour, the occasional brilliance, the frequent grotesqueness of the popular wisdom of Israel.

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[1] An admirable arrangement of the Proverbs under their proper subjects has been made by Professor Foster Kent of Brown University, Rhode Island: *The Wise Men of Ancient Israel and their Proverbs*, New York, etc., 1895 (a capital handbook); but every teacher, who wishes to grasp the Book, should first make such an arrangement for himself, and then test and correct it by Professor Kent's. Besides Professor Toy's (of Harvard) Commentary on *Proverbs* in the International Critical Commentary, the teacher or student will find useful the late Rev. W. Arnot's *Laws from Heaven for Life on Earth*, and Dr. Horton's volume in the *Expositor's Bible*. See, too, Dr. Davidson's art. 'Proverbs,' in the *Encyclopædia Britannica*, ninth ed.

If before I pass to the sublimer teaching of the Prologue I may select for illustration one of the more persistent lessons of this scattered wisdom, I will choose that upon the giving and taking of reproof. Both the Prologue and the Proverbs themselves insist with a very emphatic frequency upon this difficult and painful duty. Almost to weariness they reiterate that in education and morality mere abstract teaching of the truth is not enough; and that personal discipline, criticism and even sore and humbling blame are necessary, not only for the young from the old, but for all men and women from their friends and contemporaries. You will find the words *rebuke*, *reproof*, *discipline* and *correction* in every few verses of the strenuous and unsparing doctrine of the Wise.

Now it may be objected that criticism so persistent and articulate defeats its own ends; and that we live under the more powerful Example of One who came not to judge the world but that the world through Him might be saved. In the things to which Christ cleared our dim eyes; in the wonderful patience of our God to which we waken every morning; in His fatherly trust of our foolish and wayward souls; in the sunshine, the fresh air, the sweet love and confidence of our fellow-men His children, all that goodness of God which by a thousand gentle touches leads us to repentance; or again in the compassionate holiness of Christ's own life, the infinite obligations and ideals of our manhood which His character and service of men unfold; or again in the holy lives about us which possess themselves silently in His Patience and reflect His Purity and Unselfishness — in all these we feel a divine judgement of our souls, beside which the criticisms even of the best and wisest of men sound petty and irrelevant.

Yet on the other hand we cannot shut out the noisy facts of the world we dwell in; and while we refuse to accept them as substitutes for that silent judgement of the Divine Love, which is the only sufficient rebuke and discipline of our souls, we must see that we use them, inevitable as they are, for *its* instruments and contributories. We live in a world that will not spare any man its criticisms. Some of them may be ignorant and cruel (I will deal with these in a little), but in many others we know that our consciences will not permit us to hear anything but an honest, and often a kindly, statement of what we really are or thoroughly deserve.

Our own age has been very hungry for abstract and impersonal truth; but by an exaggeration of the liberty and the rights of men, of which it is so proud, there has never been an age more impatient of personal criticism. And yet personal criticism, involving as it must strokes painful and humbling, is absolutely necessary for us all, not only from those whom we revere, or from those whom we love, but from those whom we dislike, or whom we know to dislike us. The only successful teaching of youth is that into which the element of personal criticism bravely enters, and is loyally accepted by its subject. Nor is there any friendship healthy which does not permit of the same strenuous duty among its obligations. In their trials and misfortunes, still more in their errors and faults, men are constantly tempted to turn to their weakest friends for a sympathy which is often insincere and generally undeserved. Happy rather is the man who is strong enough and true enough to choose his friends not for their agreeableness or their sympathy, but for their honesty and severe ideals.

*Better is open rebuke than love that is masked.*
*He that walketh with wise men shall be wise,*
*But the companion of fools shall be broken for it.*[1]

Yet even when criticism is stupid, irrelevant and cruel, it is, according to the Proverbs of Israel, a healthy and a stimulating discipline. *Stripes that wound cleanse away evil, and strokes*, things without sense and with only pain in them, *the innermost parts of the belly.*[2]

We all know how often a stinging judgement of us totally misses the mark for which it was intended; charging us with a fault of which we know we are innocent. Yet it at least opens our close and sleepy hearts; it lets in the air; it compels us to examine. We may resent unjust criticism, but no wise man fails to profit by it. Did such criticism only drive us to prayer; did it only force us in self-defence to carry our hearts before the judgement of God: a resort to which we are not very prone and often require to be driven: surely it would do us good. But unjust criticism will effect more for us than this. Rising as it often does from the purely conventional standards of society, or from a formal and pragmatical conception of religion — under which we ourselves may have fallen — it compels us to question and explore, and so lifts us to fresh views of morality and new understanding of God. In this same literature of Israel's wisdom we can see how Job himself was, by the unjust criticism of his friends, stung to revolt against the formulas of the popular religion, and thereby rose to new research, with its end in larger views of truth, and a more original hold upon God.

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[1] xxvii. 5; xiii. 20.

[2] xx. 30.

So much for the Proverbs of Reproof. A teacher or preacher who has made the classification advised above, will find materials as sound and various under any of the other titles suggested.

But it is time now to turn from these scattered couplets to the great poem with which the Book of Proverbs opens, Chapters i. to ix. This is remarkable not only for its very beautiful personification of Wisdom, but for the fact that it contains in Chapter viii. almost the only metaphysic to which the poetry of the Wise attained.

And first I think you shall feel from it how very unjust is that charge of utilitarianism of which I spoke. For from the outset we learn that the Wisdom which the Wise inculcate is not the slow, prudent thrift of life, gathered by petty experiences, more or less sordid and selfish: but is the reverent and whole-hearted acceptance of great principles, such as capture the heart, stir us to enthusiasm, and lift us above ourselves. In contrast to the prophets who won their truth by vision, the wise men got theirs by experience.

Yet do not understand by this that they would counsel their disciples to wait for their own experience — to gather wisdom merely by trying life as it came to them. They would have them begin with wisdom from the first, get hold of her principles, submit to her discipline, and then test her in all their daily fortunes and duties. We often hear the phrase: 'Experience teaches fools': but not so often its counterpart, *the strength of the wise is their wisdom.* Addressing those who stand on the borders of manhood, wistfully looking forward to that experience of life from which in their time most men have foolishly fancied that Wisdom is to be gained, the Wise Poet passionately reiterates that there is a Wisdom which comes before experience and without which experience itself is too often only the belated and melancholy recognition of what might have been. To the young and the simple he cries: I have something to give which life by itself can never give; but of which if you take it now you will find experience to be daily the stronger proof and richer reward. *The beginning of wisdom*, he says, *is to get wisdom.*[1] Principles are absolutely necessary for all who begin the work of life: principles which we accept, according to this Poet, partly on their own authority and partly upon their illustration in the lives we love and honour the most. Before all experience are Conscience and the Fear of God; obedience to those who are wiser and reverence for the accumulated wisdom of the nation. The Wise Men found their principles, as Mazzini put it, in the agreement of conscience and history: the harmony of the moral sense in a man himself with the best experience of his race. Hence on reverence, on meekness, on the native instinct for truth; as on the self-evidencing character of truth and its beauty, the poem insists again and again. But this is all in a direction the very opposite of utilitarianism.

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[1] iv. 7.

The pursuit of Wisdom is another subject of the Poem: which regards it as a mutual and responsive process — we seeking Wisdom, but Wisdom also seeking us.

By an age like our own, which has so much lost both the faculty of attention and of prolonged meditation — and which demands from its most voluminous teachers that its mental food shall be broken up for it and given under headlines and in paragraphs — by such an age the instruction of this Poem may well be taken to heart. I know no teachers who lay more stress upon the cultivation of the mental power of attention: that sure and expert grip of the mind without which both reason and faith are impossible and memory itself becomes a confused and inarticulate pain. They urge them *to lay hold on wisdom*, *to purchase understanding*, *to hearken*, *to listen*, *to* *fasten — so that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom and apply thine heart to understanding. Yea if thou seek her as silver and search for her as for hid treasures then shalt thou understand the fear of Jahweh and find the knowledge of God.*[1] These powers of attention and concentration the poem allies with purity of heart, illustrating the distractions and dissipation of impure or covetous thoughts. On the whole subject of the moral habits and the intellect, or the connection between purity of heart and the enthusiasm for hard work, there is no teaching in all literature more sane and more bracing.

But to such strenuous endeavours the Poem tells us there is a liberal response from the very heart of the universe. Wisdom is not conceived after the fashion in which others have dreamt of her, as a slumbering deity difficult to rouse; or as a jealous one awake only to guard her secrets from men and to baffle them in their pursuit of her — the path to her presence strewn with the bones of those who have sought her in vain. She is human and near and kind: a Woman clothed with beauty, visible to every eye and with desire for all in whom the love of her beauty has been wakened: pitiful, solicitous, urgent, liberal, redemptive:

*I love them that love me*
*And they that seek me early shall find me.*[2]

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[1] ii. 2–4.

[2] viii. 17.

Like the highest wisdom of all the great races, this also is represented as popular. Though the fellow of God and the artificer of the Universe, her home is in the habitable parts of the earth, and her delights with the children of men. Like Socrates and like Jesus she is a street-preacher, a frequenter of markets and the assemblies of civic life :

*Wisdom crieth aloud in the street.*
*She uttereth her voice in the broad places.*
*She crieth in the chief place of concourse*
*At the entering in of the gates.*
*In the city she uttereth her words.*[1]

But she is popular and public only for a higher end. In the secret of the Universe beats the desire to save men, and the Wisdom of God is at the heart of it redemptive :

*Unto you, O men, I call,*
*And my voice is to the sons of men.*
*O ye simple, understand wisdom,*
*And ye fools, be of an understanding heart.*
*For whoso findeth me findeth life,*
*And he that misseth me wrongeth himself.*[2]

Wisdom descending from God's right hand to plead with the man on the street ; the final passion and glory of all the forces and faculties of the Universe, to win the common and the simple from sin ! It is again the Spirit of Christ that we feel.

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[1] i. 20 f.

[2] viii. 4 f., 35 f.

And hence we have those alternative pictures of Wisdom and Sensuality, whose realism is so striking. Why are both thus set side by side, as women of beauty and attraction, urgent entertainers of mankind, but with the intention that the Wisdom of the higher life shall be made to appear as popular, pervasive and persistent as ever the cunning of the lower has proved itself to be; that our hearts shall be driven to feel as hunted and haunted by temptations to a life of virtue and wisdom, as they ever were by the temptations of the flesh and the world?

That is a vision, which the preacher of to-day must heartily welcome: when the opportunities to vice are on every side so open, so attractive, in many cases so apparently secure; when on the other hand our unpurged eyes feel righteousness to be so abstract and so arduous. The vision of Wisdom would show us that this is not true. Righteousness is not abstract nor unreal; not hard to find in the crowd about us, nor in her beginnings beyond the reach of any, however thronged or trampled by the world. Everywhere her gates are open, her presence manifest, her joys obvious and solid. She dwells with men. There is not an arena on which we are called to live, but is brilliant with the incarnate examples of righteousness and purity. She dwells with God, and was with Him when the world was made. The forces of the Universe are on the side of the will that chooses virtue: and to the ignorant and the wandered, if they have but one spark of desire for what is pure and honest and lovely, the heart of God Himself comes forth with the desire to teach, to lift, to restore.

This is the Spirit of Christ in Hebrew Wisdom, and with it we may suitably close our study of Wisdom's Books.

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